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**‘BE POLITE, BE PROFESSIONAL, BE PREPARED TO KILL’¹:
COUNTERINSURGENCY, MASCULINITY AND BRITISH
MILITARY DOCTRINE**

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¹ Lt. Col. John Nagl (2007) summarising the new counterinsurgency approach in a television interview with John Stewart on the US Daily Show. A similar formulation “Be polite, be professional and have a plan to kill everyone you meet” is attributed to Gen. James Mattis (Ricks 2007:313). It was used as a poster in a marine base in Ramadi, Iraq (Filkins 2006).

Candidate's Declaration of Own Work

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed solely by me and the work is entirely my own. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Hilary Cornish

15/05/15

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary counterinsurgency has been characterised by a shift from the ‘kill or capture’ of insurgents to prioritising winning over civilian populations. This focus on the population brings a particular skillset to the centre of military practice. Prioritising understanding culture, training, mentoring and relationships, practices previously associated with peacekeeping operations are conducted alongside combat. Feminist literature on peacekeeping has traced the relationship between entrenched hierarchies of gender and race in military institutions and abuses perpetrated by peacekeepers. This thesis contributes to that literature. It focuses on the British Armed Forces to analyse how identity is constructed in relation to contemporary counterinsurgency, in order to understand changing military roles and the potential impact on civilian populations.

The thesis comprises a feminist discourse analysis of select British military doctrine. Doctrine draws together practice, teaching, and policy and offers a productive site to study institutional identity. The analysis shows how these non-combat practices are made sense of in relation to different configurations of masculinity, which don’t evoke combat or aggression. Nonetheless, they are constructed as masculine identities, hierarchical in organisation and constituting relations of power. I argue this recourse to masculinity enables the framing of non-combat practices as *warfare* and so valuable military activity. However, this framing simultaneously restrains the ways in which they can be understood.

The thesis further highlights an ambiguity in the texts which argue both for widespread institutional adaption to the practices, and their limitation to a specific specialism and personnel. This ambiguity I argue is productive for an institution facing an uncertain future, leaving open possibilities for reform, or to revert to focussing on traditional understandings of core combat related military tasks. This thesis contributes to feminist debate about the possibility for military reform, and the capacity for Armed Forces to act as agents for peace. I argue that military reform is possible and occurring; the British Armed Forces are developing more sophisticated approaches to gender, human security and culture. However, whilst this is likely to have some benefit, the (re)establishment of gendered and raced hierarchies, limit the extent to which such reform offers meaningful change.

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List of Abbreviations

ATP – Allied Tactical Publication

ATTP - Allied Tactics, Techniques and Procedures

ADP - Army Doctrine Publication

BDD – British Defence Doctrine

CBRN - Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear

CGS – Commander of the General Staff

CiC – Commander in Chief

COIN - Counterinsurgency

DA – Defence Academy

DCDC – Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre

DCSU – Defence Cultural Specialist Unit

DCLC - Defence Centre for Languages and Culture

DFID – Department for International Development

FET – Female Engagement Team

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HMS – Her Majesties Ship

ISAF – International Security Assistance Force

JDN - Joint Doctrine Notice

JDP - Joint Doctrine Publication

LGB – Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual

LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NCO – Non Commissioned Officer

NGHO – Non Governmental Humanitarian Organisation

NGO – Non Governmental Organisations

OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNSCR – United Nations Security Council Resolution

List of Doctrines & Referencing Note

Joint Doctrine Analysed:

Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 04 Understanding (2010)
Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 6/11 Partnering Indigenous Forces (2011)
Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 0-01 British Defence Doctrine (2011)
Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 4-13 Culture and the Human Terrain (2013)

Joint Doctrine frequently referred to:

Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 3-40 Security and Stabilisation: the Military Contribution (2009)
(Shortened to *Security and Stabilisation*) (A4 Version)
Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1/09 The Significance of Culture to the Military (2009) (Withdrawn)
Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 6/10 Security Transitions (2010)

Army Doctrine frequently referred to:

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) Operations (2010)
Army Field Manual Vol 1, Part 10 (AFM1:10) Countering Insurgency (2010)
Army Field Manual Vol 1, Part 9 (AFM1:9) Tactics for Stability Operations (2007)
Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) Army Doctrine Primer AC 71954 (2011)

U.S Doctrine frequently referred to:

US Field Manual (FM) 3-24 Counterinsurgency (2006)
US Field Manual (FM) 3-07.1 Security Force Assistance (2009)

Referencing Note

To increase legibility, doctrine in text is referred to by the title (shortened where appropriate) in italics. The designation JDP, JDN, ADP etc. and the number is omitted. The date of publication is included in the first instance, but is generally omitted when the doctrine is repeatedly referred to.

All doctrine is listed in the bibliography under the Ministry of Defence (UK), and this is abbreviated to MoD in text where the title is not referred to in full. Authorship of doctrine, its structure and organisation is discussed in Chapter 3.

UK Doctrine is (mostly) organised by numbered paragraphs and numbered chapters. Page numbers refer to the chapter not the document as a whole. The result is a two figure page number separated by a hyphen, the first referring to the chapter, the second to the page number in relation to that chapter e.g. 2-23 refers to the 23rd page of Chapter Two. There are two exceptions. Firstly, front matter (preface, foreword, permissions, contents etc) is numbered using consecutive, single roman numerals. Secondly, Appendices, Annexes and Lexicons (Glossaries) take a letter or word designation in place of chapter number eg. A3-7 refers to the third appendix, page 7 or Lexicon-6, refers to 6th page of the “Lexicon” (Glossary). This is the referencing used in text. When referring to a span of pages I use the word ‘to’ rather than a hyphen to avoid confusion.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

...in the three tours I have served in Afghanistan as a British infantry officer, it has struck me that this 'war' is really not what war is typically understood to be (Simpson 2012:2).

This thesis is about war, how it is understood and practised by the British military. In particular, it is about the blurry boundaries around what 'counts' as war, and what is at stake in negotiating or shifting those boundaries for how military institutions understand themselves and their work. As Emile Simpson argues in the quote above, the counterinsurgency 'war' in Afghanistan represented a departure from the 'typical' understanding of war. The thesis takes as its focus British military adaptations to counterinsurgency warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, where non-combat practices associated with state-building and winning-over the local populations challenge the warfighting ethos of the institution. In this thesis I take a feminist approach to understanding counterinsurgency, drawing on the strengths of feminist research on identity to show the work that gender does in making-sense of counterinsurgency as war.

The wars on Afghanistan, then Iraq, began as conventional combat campaigns. Victory in these operations was never in question. The United States' overwhelming military might was joined by a coalition to first bombard from the air, then invade and occupy. These phases of the campaigns are often understood as 'conventional' as a "form of warfare between states that employs direct military confrontation to defeat an adversary's armed forces, destroy an adversary's war-making capacity, or seize or retain territory in order to force a change in an adversary's government or policies" (Dept of the Army 2008:1-4 see also Kiras 2008: 225-227). They comprised combat operations launched for the control of territory, by state military forces against other state military forces. For many military personnel reflecting on the experience, it was a (welcome) chance to experience 'real war' for which they had trained (Duncanson 2013:77-79, Duncanson & Cornish, 2012:154-156). However uneven the balance of power and inevitable the victory, they were easily understood as wars.

Following the initial invasion and occupation of Iraq, it became quickly apparent that the war was not over. Remnants of the defeated Baathist government forces, and others resisting the occupation or seeking power used guerrilla tactics against the occupation, and later the newly established government they supported. This occurred alongside, and was at times indistinguishable from, violent crime. The state infrastructure, already overstretched by the harsh international sanctions regime, had collapsed and occupation forces were unable, unprepared or unwilling to provide basic security. In Afghanistan in late 2003 the remnants of the Taliban had regrouped and began an organised guerrilla campaign against the newly established government. There are substantial differences in the political and military circumstances of both countries, which are beyond the scope of this thesis. However in both wars, the US and coalition allies faced insurgencies - complex

opposition from armed groups using guerrilla tactics, with some popular support, and seeking to undermine the governments the coalition supported. The wars were not over, but they were also no longer 'conventional'. Rather than characterised by high-tech weaponry and major combat operations pitching state against state, they were now irregular conflicts characterised by non-state actors, using guerrilla or 'asymmetric' tactics to offset the coalition's overwhelming material advantage.

The response of the US-led coalition was to shift from understanding the conflicts as conventional with concurrent counterterrorism activity to a wider paradigm of counterinsurgency, although the approach was unevenly supported and adopted in practice (Kaplan 2013). The counterinsurgency approach understood the conflicts to be one of gaining the support of the Iraqi and Afghan populations. This marked a shift in focus from the kill-or-capture of enemy fighters to 'winning' over the local population with improved security, humanitarian relief, state infrastructure and development initiatives. It brought the state-building and political elements of the occupation firmly into the sphere of military activity and with it a set of practices not previously understood as part of war, but with more in common with civilian, political or development work and peacebuilding. These activities were understood alongside the traditional military activity – gathering intelligence, targeting enemy fighters, and destroying their means of support. Nagl (2007), an author of the new US counterinsurgency doctrine, jokingly summarised the new approach as 'be polite, be professional, and be prepared to kill'. The use of coercive military force was still a key feature of counterinsurgency; devastating and often fatal, for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

This question of identity is important to make sense of the shift to counterinsurgency and the blending of different practices. Understanding how the non-combat and combat elements of a counterinsurgency approach are made sense of as part of the British Armed Forces as an institution has potential for significant impact in a number of areas. Firstly, in the prioritisation of institutional resources at all levels – from strategic allocation of funding to tactical level decisions on the ground, decisions are made on the basis of understanding what the armed forces are for and what they do. Secondly, how the personnel understand themselves, their role and these practices, will impact how they are likely to be carried out on the ground and again the priority they receive in pressurised environments. War-fighters and peace-builders may need different resources, have different goals, and behave differently. Finally, how the military understands themselves and these practices is also key to making sense of their relationship to other actors: other states, other militaries, other government agencies, national and international humanitarian relief or development non-governmental organisations and civilian populations at home or abroad. A key contribution of this thesis is to show how the study of identity, and in particular a gendered analysis of identity, can make clearer the processes of boundary marking and identity which in turn contribute to shaping military activity and behaviour.

The broad research question this project seeks to answer then is how do the British armed forces construct their identity in relation to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? The particular focus on the

population and cultural understanding, which also gained traction in the popular press and political rhetoric, leads to the secondary question: how are the non-combative practices associated with these responses understood in an institution whose *raison d'être* is ostensibly combat?

This introduction proceeds in two parts. First it turns to counterinsurgency, outlining the rise of a population-centred counterinsurgency approach in relation to the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It highlights its characterisation as a less violent, 'kinder, gentler' war, and its relationship to peacekeeping activities of the 1990's. It traces a relationship to theories of 'New War' that argue that war itself has changed in relation to increased globalisation. The second part looks at why a feminist approach is a useful and insightful contribution to studying irregular war. I conclude this chapter by outlining how the thesis proceeds.

COUNTERINSURGENCY WAR AND THE NEW SAVAGE WARS OF PEACE

There is a vast literature on counterinsurgency warfare, which has seen considerable growth since the occupation and subsequent insurgency in Iraq in 2003. There is a body of critical academic literature, which reveals the brutality of historical counterinsurgency campaigns (e.g. Newsinger 2003, Anderson 2005) and which explores current mythologizing of counterinsurgency past and present as a humanitarian form of warfare (e.g. Dixon 2009, Cohen 2010, Gilmore 2011, Khalili 2010a, Branch 2010, Gardner and Young 2008). However, much of the literature is dominated by practitioner-theorists, former or serving officers or civil servants writing about their own experiences or analysing past campaigns to argue for contemporary practice. The names of the most well-known resound in doctrine and military discussions as cult figures, in particular John Nagl and David Kilcullen whose names recur in this thesis. Alongside books and journal articles they have also contributed or directly authored military doctrine, and formed part of David Petraeus's core group of counterinsurgency advocates and advisors responsible for the US adaption to counterinsurgency warfare. They are politically savvy, conducting press interviews and are widely known beyond elite defence circles.

They also feature in British defence discourse. British practitioner-theorists have a far lower profile than the US counterinsurgency figures in general. Retired Generals Sir Frank Kitson, and Sir Rupert Smith have published well-read works which are taught, and cited in UK doctrine, with both acknowledged in the doctrine *Security and Stabilisation* (MoD 2009a). These practitioner-theorists draw on a legacy of similar figures; the work of David Galula ([1964] 2006) writing about his experience suppressing nationalist uprising against the French in Algeria, Robert Thompson ([1966]2005) on his time suppressing communist revolution against the British rule in Malaya and the ever present TE Lawrence ("of Arabia"). Alongside the contemporary cult figures, and the 'classics' are a multitude of defence-academic books, reports and papers which consider the best interpretations of historic campaigns and contemporary field experience. They are by and large technical arguments about the possibilities, limitations and changes in contemporary practice. They resound with short snappy phrases: 'learn and adapt', 'cultural capacity' 'minimum force' 'ink spots' 'clear and hold' 'hearts and minds' 'local engagement' and 'political primacy' which weave their way in and out of

formal and informal doctrine and policy, coded as theory and/or best practice (e.g. Alderson 2007, Betz and Cormac 2009:321-322, Nagl 2002, Mills 2006, Gentry 2010, MoD 2009a, US Army 2006, Hoffman 2007).

A population-centred approach

The majority of the writers and proponents of what Ucko (2009) calls the ‘new counterinsurgency era’ are advocating for variations on a particular approach, which is now widely accepted as ‘best practice’. It is often termed ‘British’, but can be loosely ascribed as ‘population-centred’ which is the term I use in this thesis. It has a long history in British military thought and doctrine, but was more recently adopted into US doctrine with a new Counterinsurgency Field Manual (US Dept. of the Army, 2006) and David Petraeus’ command in Iraq in 2007. The core tenets of this approach stress the political nature of the war and the imperative to win over the general population’s consent, acceptance, or compliance. General Templar, the military lead in the much vaunted British victory suppressing the insurgency in Malaya, is often quoted as saying “the shooting side of this business is only 25% of the trouble and the other 75% lies in getting the people of the country behind us” (quoted in Dixon 2009:362).

In this version of counterinsurgency the focus is shifted away from the ‘kill or capture’ of enemy insurgents, and destruction of material resources also referred to as ‘search and destroy’ activity associated now with a narrower counter-terrorist approach. Instead, the focus is on ‘clearing and holding’ areas and ‘securing the population’ in order to isolate the insurgent and cut off their popular support. This latter focus can involve a mix of coercive techniques to physically control the population such as ‘protected hamlets’, curfews, stop and search, and might also involve improving provision of public services, strategic relief and development efforts to win over the local population (MoD 2010, Bettjes 2011). Propaganda or ‘Information’ campaigns to ‘manage the message’ also form part of the approach to win the populations over, through positive messaging or fear. In this version of counterinsurgency a key phrase is ‘minimum force’ (Betz and Cormac 2009:321, Thornton 2004, 2009; Mockaitis 2012). Less physically coercive measures and less combative approaches are generally characterised as essential to avoid losing popular support, or extending support for the insurgents. What counts as minimal to various military personnel and to those experiencing ‘force’ is likely to significantly differ (the debates is played out in an exchanges between Bennett, 2007, 2010 and Thornton, 2009)

Such efforts involve much greater interaction with local populations, and greater understanding of both local and insurgent motivations and context. As a result, culture and language skills are required as well as a deeper grasp of the local social, political and economic landscape and interactions. Most classic works of counterinsurgency such as Thompson ([1966] 2005) stress the importance of civilian authority and political leadership over the military campaign. Civil-military co-operation, and work

between and across government departments, termed the 'Integrated Approach'² in current British military jargon, is emphasised as part of contemporary counterinsurgency (MoD 2009:xii-xiii). However it's also recognised that the military may have to take on a broader role, in insecure environments which are considered too dangerous for civilians (MoD 2009:25).

Counterinsurgency: A kinder, gentler war?

Population-centred counterinsurgency offers a comprehensive and appealing approach to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the rhetoric leading up to both wars, they were carefully stressed as targeting the governments – the Taliban, or Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime - not the general populations of either country. The wars were rather presented as liberating the ordinary Iraqi or Afghan peoples (Bush 2001, BBC 2003). The rising insurgencies and violence, devastating civilian casualties and suffering, was a stark contrast to that rhetoric. In the early phase of the Iraq war, the US were critiqued for being heavy handed, unprepared for the counterinsurgency and for losing popular support through an approach incompatible with the coalition goals for a liberated and democratic Iraq (Mansoor 2009; Ucko 2010:133-134).

Counterinsurgency offered a new way of framing the war, which was more compatible with the political rhetoric. The tenets of minimum force, protecting the population and winning 'hearts and minds' with relief efforts and development, all fit an agenda of liberation and spreading democracy. Counterinsurgency offered a way to frame the conflict as a 'kinder, gentler' way of war which perhaps shows "a significant shift away from the US Army's initial high-impact war-fighting approach, towards one that might be better able to address the underlying causes of violence and insecurity in post-conflict societies, with a reduced impact on the civilian population" (Gilmore 2011:21, see also Cohen 2010). Cementing this idea, the new US Counterinsurgency Field Manual (US Dept. of the Army 2006) was even written in consultation with human rights groups and development organisations; the popular print edition contained an introduction from Sarah Sewell in her capacity as the then director of the Carr Center for Human Rights (Sewell 2007).

The popularity of counterinsurgency, and its discussion in the popular realm tended to focus on the 'hearts and minds' story. As Utting (2014:72) points out, Templer's idea that counterinsurgency is 25% 'shooting' and 75% winning popular support is often referenced in a way that obscures the role of the 25% 'kinetic' activity. The idea of minimal force, political engagement and winning over the population's 'hearts and minds' is certainly heavily promoted, and picked up by the popular press (for examples see Bishop 2003; McElroy 2007; Sengupta 2009). The apparent successes of the surge in Iraq in 2007 seem to vindicate it as an approach. However, the vagueness of 'minimum' force and the discussion of counterinsurgency both past and present serves to obscure both the still present 25% 'shooting side' of the business and the disparity between practice and theory. Dixon (2009:353) points

² Formally the comprehensive approach

to the tension between US and UK approaches in Iraq and Afghanistan arguing that “describing British counter-insurgency theory as ‘hearts and minds’ may be useful in terms of public relations, but it undermines the theory as a guide to operations because it can be interpreted in such divergent ways”. The brutal reality of counterinsurgency, both historic and contemporary, belies the myth of a ‘kinder, gentler’ war, as Andersons’ (2005) descriptions of public hangings, forced labour and torture in Kenya demonstrate, or McCoy’s (2007) tracing of counterinsurgency and tortures (see also Young 2007, Gilmore 2011, Cohen 2010, Dixon 2009).

The US adoption of a population-centred counterinsurgency did not suggest a need to abandon a combat-focused approach but to reframe, reformulate and combine it with other aspects of population-centred counterinsurgency. The new US Counterinsurgency Field Manual suggested the need for soldiers to be *both* warriors and nation-builders (US Dept. of the Army 2006: xlvi). The warrior was still a key part of the configuration as are the euphemistically phrased ‘kinetic’ (combat) elements. Similarly the UK Army Field Manual Countering Insurgency (2010) stresses from the outset that counterinsurgency is in fact *War* and details the ferocity of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, alongside the tenets of a population centred approach.

A very British kind of war

The population-centred model of counterinsurgency is referred to as British, in reference to the long history of British counterinsurgency and high profile ‘successes’ – particularly in Malaya in the 1950’s and to a lesser extent, but more recently, in Northern Ireland. At the launch of the war on Afghanistan in 2001 the British Armed Forces were considered to have considerable expertise in counterinsurgency, with both an active doctrine tradition and an institutional memory, which set them apart from the United States (Ucko 2010). For example Nagl’s (2004) work *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* (which owes its title to TE Lawrence) contrasts the British experience in Malaya to the US experience in Vietnam, arguing that ultimately the British were better able to learn and adapt to the conflict (see also Corum 2006, Willis 2005;). As Mockaitis (1990) glowingly writes:

The British have succeeded in counter-insurgency where others have failed because history has given them the kind of military establishment and colonial administrative experience necessary to defeat revolutionary movements. (Mockaitis 1990:180)

Historic counterinsurgency practice, and reputation for Britain’s expertise in it, comes from a history of suppressing insurgencies or revolutions against their colonial or imperial rule (either direct, or through supporting a proxy government). In Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, Oman, Borneo, Cyprus, Aden and Ireland the British have had opportunity to practice and develop counterinsurgency war. The brutal realities of these campaigns are often obscured through their selective reinterpretation and application to current practice; “the British approach in Malaya did involve high levels of force, was not fought within the law and led to abuses of human rights”(Dixon 2009:322 see also Newsinger 2002).

As an example, the successful British campaign to suppress the Mau Mau revolt against white colonial rule in Kenya 1952 -1960, ran concurrently with the Malaya emergency, but is less overtly referenced. The victory was won through a campaign which included torture, mass internment, forced labour and public hangings (see Anderson 2005). Frank Kitson first learned counterinsurgency as a young officer serving in Malaya, and later on he served a tour in the suppression of the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya. His works are considered part of the British canon of counterinsurgency, and he acknowledged as contributing to the doctrine publication *Security and Stabilisation*, with excerpts of his work quoted throughout (MoD 2009). Although less commonly cited, experience in Kenya still informs and appears in other British military publications (e.g. MoD 2010a, and see in Chapter 5:95 below). Reference to Kitson's work and to British experience in Kenya focuses on the aspects of 'minimal force', and the 'rule of law'. It is a selective retelling, to be more compatible with contemporary values (Bennett 2007, Mockaitis 2012, Dixon 2009). A distorted vision of British colonial past, informs the present quite directly.

Peacekeeping and Counterinsurgency

As 'irregular' war, counterinsurgency is part of a continuum of military activities. The lexicon shifts over time but similar activities have at times been referred to in British defence circles as small wars, imperial policing, counter-revolutionary warfare, low intensity conflict and military operations other than war (Mockaitis 1999:40, see also Kitson 1971:2). Counterinsurgency has much in common with counterterrorism, stabilisation operations, and peace support operations which are all current British terminology and the boundaries between them are blurred and contingent on political context as well as the balance of force used. Whilst UN peacekeeping of the Cold War era was a more limited affair, the operations in the 1990's created a more expansive role for peacekeeping. This era of peace support or enforcement operations drew from doctrine on counterinsurgency and the various synonyms of irregular war (Thornton 2000, Friis 2010). Whilst distinctions are drawn between peacekeeping and other areas of activities, the boundaries are often blurred and doctrine for one area of activity is often applicable to another. British Lt. Gen. Kiszely greets this with some frustration:

Doctrine tends to be labelled and pigeon-holed by type of operation—for example, Warfighting, Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, Counterinsurgency—and can too often be seen by the unthinking, despite the health-warning on the packet, as prescriptive. Moreover, these reassuringly neat delineations sit uneasily with the reality that campaigns involving counterinsurgency are inherently messy—a kaleidoscope of different types of operation—and, therefore, remarkably resistant to neatness in delineation (2007:9)

The relationship between counterinsurgency and peacekeeping is a particularly close and multifaceted one. The development of peacekeeping doctrine in the British Armed Forces is one that is developed from counterinsurgency (Thornton, 2000; Mockaitis, 1999). However it is rarely brought into the context of Afghanistan, and even more rarely Iraq. The difference is one of purpose, legitimacy and context, rather than one of practices on the ground. Both peacekeeping and counterinsurgency are

conducted by the same personnel and involve the same theoretical aspects of civil-military cooperation, limited or minimal force and the ‘protection’ of civilians (Friis, 2010:50). With peacekeeping operations in the 1990’s increasingly occurring under conditions which allow for coercive force, it is in fact the balance of “mandates, political foundation, equipment, rules of engagement” that provide the distinction rather than the military activities per se (Friis 2010:50). However critics of British performance in Basra point to the ‘peacekeeping approach’ of the British forces as resulting in failure to take enough control sufficiently quickly. This is ascribed to a misunderstanding of the nature of the conflict as a counterinsurgency war, rather than a peacekeeping mission (Ucko 2010:134; Mansoor 2009). How conflicts are understood impacts how they are undertaken.

The blurry lines of “new wars”

The blurry lines of peacekeeping and counterinsurgency are part of the need to understand and categorise the types of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and more generally contemporary war. These concerns are part of a debate as to whether the post-Cold War era has marked a significant change in war, with Kaldor’s (1999, 2007b) formulation of ‘New Wars’ a key text. She argues that we entered a new era of conflict, where increased globalisation meant that wars would no longer be ‘Clauswitzian’ affairs which pitch state against state but rather would be characterised by intra-state conflict, the blurring of lines between criminality and war. New wars for Kaldor show a blurring of the lines:

between war (usually defined as violence between states or organized political groups for political motives), organized crime (violence undertaken by privately organized groups for private purposes, usually financial gain) and large-scale violations of human rights (violence undertaken by states or politically organized groups against individuals) (Kaldor 2007b:2)

In the post-Cold War era a discussion emerged about the changing nature of war. The idea that there was a new era of conflict was popular in the late nineties, seeming to explain the conflicts and atrocities seen in the 1990’s, including in Rwanda, Haiti, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Bosnia, Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia. Proponents of the ‘New Wars’ theory argued that the era was defined by a shift from ‘conventional’ inter-state conflict, to intra-state conflicts or civil wars. These were characterised as low intensity, using guerrilla methods and terrorism, often targeting civilians and leading to higher levels of atrocities and displaced populations. These conflicts, the argument goes, are more likely to be fuelled by identity rather than territory and draw on globalised networks for economic and material resources, weakening the territorially bounded nation state (See Van Creveld 1991; Gray, 2006; Kaldor, 1999, 2007a; Munkler, 2004 [2002]). Despite substantial critique undermining empirical evidence for substantial change in war (see Kalyvas 2001; Newman 2004; Melander, Oberg, and Hall 2007), the idea of ‘new wars’ has nonetheless remained a popular paradigm. As Kalyvas (2001) and Newman (2004) argue, the most substantial change is perhaps in Western perception of war. That shift in perception of war has considerable impact for military institutions.

Versions of the new wars theory have also been formulated within military and defence circles. Particularly of note is retired General Sir Rupert Smith's influential *Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (2006) prominently cited in the British joint doctrine publication *Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution* (2009). Retired US Marine officer Thomas Hammes (2004) *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* was included in the recommend reading list in the US Counterinsurgency Field Manual (US Dept. of the Army 2006) and somewhat more controversially retired US Air Force's John Robb's *Brave New War* (2007). These texts, conforming to the practitioner-theorist tradition of counterinsurgency, take a more military approach to the new wars thesis, arguing that Armed Forces need to adapt to low intensity conflict and stress its priority over a focus on intra-state war from which it is differentiated.

How much the military should adapt and configure itself to irregular rather than 'conventional' war is central to counterinsurgency debates which rest on the identity of the armed forces and what counts as 'proper' or 'real' war. These arguments play out through the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which although 'officially' ended continue to be areas of violence and instability spilling out across borders into neighbouring countries. Western forces are playing multiple roles. The wars, and the ongoing conflict, are described as complex, hybrid and postmodern. There are frequent references to their 'networked' nature and the globalised connections which fuel them. These are understood as 'contemporary' or 'new' aspects of wars, and correspondingly doctrine and approaches to conflict must be updated and adapted to fit.

A FEMINIST APPROACH TO MAKE SENSE OF IRREGULAR WAR?

Contemporary counterinsurgency in theory and in practice on the ground sits in the blurry and contested territory of irregular war and political violence. At the heart of these boundaries is a question of identity. The wars in/on Iraq and Afghanistan are characterised by theorists and personnel by their complexity, confusion, contrasts and contradictions. These are questions of identity – of how a conflict is understood and how the military understands its role in relationship to it. What kinds of war are fought - if they are even wars at all - and how they are fought depends on how Armed Forces see themselves and the conflicts. The practices of violence, restraint, military and civilian measures, balance of ground forces and air support and acceptance of 'rules of engagement' both shape and are shaped by military culture and identity. In this thesis I demonstrate how feminist work on gender and war is ideally suited for analysing the processes of sense-making which are engaged in counterinsurgency, or more broadly irregular war.

Defining counterinsurgency requires delineating between the sub-state political violence of terrorism or assassination, and the state sanctioned political violence of war; between the private violence of crime, and the public violence of national or international politics. It rests on the legitimacy of actors and motives, distinguishing between state militaries, revolutionaries, insurgents, local militias, activists, agitators, politicians, religious leaders and "neutral" humanitarians. These are distinctions that filter into the lines of who is understood as civilian and who is a combatant or potentially a

combatant. How and where the lines are drawn is part of what counts as war, what is 'other than war' and what peace is and how it might be kept or built. Where the lines are drawn, what is understood by the actors involved impacts on the kinds of violence used, the kinds of people targeted, who suffers and who survives. It matters in the decisions about launching interventions and wars and in how they are conducted, resisted and what violence that entails. The distinctions matter in how they are ended or perpetuated, in official rhetoric and in practice, and in the eyes of different actors.

Firstly, feminist approaches are particularly suited to exploring these complex issues of identity and war as these distinctions are made sense of through gendered logics. War, the military and combat are rooted in binary understandings of the masculine and feminine, of strength and weakness. This is seen in the rigid enforcement of men's and women's roles in war, where the military is perceived as the preserve of men, and women in wartime epitomise the innocent civilian (Chapter Two deals with this in detail).

Secondly feminist approaches to theorising war tend to be multidimensional. Rather than accepting a pre-established distinction between communities or actors on the ground, between combatants, states, governments and high level decision makers, feminist work often interrogates how these distinctions come to be and the processes and logics which establish them as natural. Conceptually approaches to gender have tended to integrate understandings of individuals, institutions and symbolism as inextricably linked, even if they focus on one aspect (see Hooper 2001, Peterson 2008, Cohn 2013).

Thirdly, related to the previous point, feminist approaches are united by a close attention to and theorisation of relations of power (Connell, 1987; Tickner, 1992). Gendered distributions of power privilege the masculine (and that associated with the masculine) over the feminine (and that associated with the feminine). Cohn describes understanding gender as a structural power relation as the conceptual 'lynchpin' that unites multiple feminist approaches to gender (2013:4). Moreover, feminist theorising has grown increasingly sophisticated in understanding the complexity of the relationships of power as gendered relationships are embedded in and constructed through ideologies of race, class and ability which make 'natural' multiple relationships of power (MacClintock 1995, Agathangelou & Ling 2004). Counterinsurgency is complicated because of the multiple systems of power at play and through the disruption of the 'natural' status quo. A feminist approach which is alert to the distribution of power, can show how the tensions between military and civilian, and the contradictions between peacebuilding and combat, are impacted by this distribution.

Finally, there is a tendency in feminist work on war and peace to see the boundaries as already blurred. Feminist work doesn't see as natural the categories which are pulled into question by counterinsurgency or irregular warfare. Whilst the counterinsurgency literature is concerned with the definitions of war and the role of the military, feminist work has been considering these lines as already unclear. Paying attention to women's lives, feminists have argued the lines between conflict and peace are not the same for all actors in a conflict. Work on militarisation suggests porous

boundaries between war and peace (Cohn 2013: Enloe 1983, 2007, Diwan 2007). Work on “post-conflict” settings and experience has shown the continuation of (gendered) violence beyond a formally agreed ‘peace’ (e.g. Cohn & Ruddick 2004, Cockburn 1998, Kirk 2010).

The opening quote from Simpson shows his realisation that this war “is really not what war is typically understood to be”. It rests in his position as a British Army Officer, having been deployed to Afghanistan to fight a war. Simpson assumes one understanding of war, he learnt what ‘war’ was supposed to be, and found that in Afghanistan this didn’t match his expectations. The war did not meet his expectations, and the counterinsurgency literature is littered with papers decrying the ability to learn and adapt to irregular war, the lack of training for this kind of war, and references to a military distaste for irregular conflict and preference for the inter-state wars they comparatively rarely fight (Kiszely 2006, Nagl 2002). A feminist curiosity asks what that expectation is? Where does it come from? What systems of power inform these expectations? What is at stake in changing the expectation of war, and what new understandings emerge?

This thesis seeks to engage from a feminist perspective in some aspects of that story which I trace through doctrine as a site of sense-making, where identity is contested and constructed. One of the aspects of counterinsurgency which makes it less easily understood as war is the involvement of non-combat activities, which blur the lines between military and non-military work whilst trying to leave the understanding of war as combat, and therefore military, untroubled. This thesis examines this relationship through the prism of institutional identity. How does what the British Armed Forces do on the ground impact on how they understand themselves and their work? I trace this relationship of practice and identity through the institutional site of doctrine. Contemporary doctrine today comprises a vast network of living documents which are authored and updated in relation to institutional need, that draw lessons from past and current experience into ‘guidelines’ for current and future action. Doctrine is ‘what is taught’ in military educational and training establishments, and it is also contested and debated. Increasingly doctrine is also published publically, and disseminated to a wider audience providing a guide to ‘how the military thinks’ which reaches beyond the boundaries of the institution itself.

This thesis explores the shifting and complex terrain of military identity through turning a feminist lens to doctrine in the British Armed Forces. It turns this lens to the doctrine at the margins rather than the centre, which deals specifically with non-combat practices implicated in the British Armed Forces struggle with contemporary counterinsurgency warfare. It uses these doctrines to identify the instability created when war is not what war is typically understood to be, and what this means for an institution whose identity rests on war. This chapter concludes by outlining how the thesis proceeds.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is structured eight chapters, arranged into three parts: Part I Theoretical and Methodological approach, Part II The Doctrine and Part III Analysis, Implications and Conclusions.

The first part comprises two chapters which together provide the theoretical and methodological approach which informs the thesis. Chapter Two traces the links between military institutions and gendered approaches to identity within the literature. It explores the arguments of feminists who make explicit the relationship between combat and masculinity and the atrocities of war and imperialism, and considers the potential for militaries to become progressive forces in the world. It looks at ideas of change and continuity in military institutions, and argues for an approach which does not preclude change through reference to inherent characteristics but which also acknowledges the ‘sticky’ elements of identity in institutions which (re)establish gendered norms. This provides the basis for Chapter Three.

Chapter Three then turns to the methodology of the project. It introduces doctrine as the focal point for the study. It explains how doctrine as institutionally produced and practice-oriented documents are a productive and informative site to analyse the complex and contradictory narratives of identity which try to reconcile warfighting ethos and non-combat oriented practices. This chapter then traces the research journey which led to the focus on doctrine and the interplay between military educational sites and doctrine and the selection of which doctrine to study. In the final section of this chapter I draw on the theoretical framework established in Chapter Two to develop an analytical strategy with which to approach the doctrine. I draw on Hansen (2006) and the adaption of her work by Duncanson (2009, 2013) as the basis for the poststructuralist discourse analysis. I use this to develop a framework of three questions to approach the texts, to capture the mutually reinforcing interplay between understanding of practice, purpose and identity which is destabilised by irregular war.

Part II of the thesis turns to the analysis of doctrine which forms the data studied in the thesis. Chapter Four provides the context for the following three analytical chapters. It shows the broader institutional narratives of the British Armed forces. I use the analytical framework developed to explore a key document in the UK Armed Forces hierarchy *British Defence Doctrine* (2011) to demonstrate the central role of national interest and the warfighting ethos to British military identity.

Chapter Five looks at the need to develop an approach to culture within the military, and analyses the doctrine *Culture and the Human Terrain*. The chapter looks at the way in which practises of cultural analysis, language and interpersonal skills are made sense of through recourse to rationality and technical skill, coded as masculine. Chapter Six explores the practice of working with the Iraqi and Afghan security forces for the British military through the doctrine *Partnering Indigenous Forces*. Here the skills required to mentor and advise are made sense of by appealing to an imperial legacy which establishes a paternalistic role for the British Armed Forces in relation to their “indigenous” counterparts. Chapter Seven then looks at the British Armed Forces’ approach to ‘thinking’ which

culminated in the doctrine *Understanding*. This doctrine counters an anti-intellectual tradition in the British armed forces, and instead suggests a need for the development of sophisticated cognitive skills, including critical thinking, extensive study and creativity. These are situated within a pragmatic framing as part of a rational decision making-process, similar to that in *Culture and the Human Terrain*.

Part III of the thesis comprises two chapters. Chapter Eight draws together the data and theory to expand on the common themes of challenge and change. It highlights the tension between non-combat practices and warfighting identity, and argues that the peacebuilding aspects are made sense of through recourse to alternative models of identity which don't rest on combat masculinity. In Chapter Nine I return to the broader themes in which this thesis sits: counterinsurgency, irregular war, and the role of identity. I summarise the findings of the thesis and their implications for military acting for peace.

PART I - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The following section is comprised of two chapters and brings together the theoretical and methodological concerns of the project. The two chapters are interrelated. Chapter two concentrates of the theoretical grounding, situating the project within a poststructuralist feminist framework. Chapter three draws this theory into the empirical concerns of the project. I first explore doctrine as an institutional site of identity construction, before explaining the research journey which lead to doctrine as the empirical focus for the research. It then returns to the theoretical concerns of chapter two, building on the approach to develop the analytical framework used to analyse the doctrine.

CHAPTER 2. GENDER AND WAR

At the root of the problem lies the fact the qualities required for fighting conventional war are different from those required for dealing with subversion or insurgency; or for taking part in peace-keeping operations for that matter. Traditionally a soldier is trained and conditioned to be strong, courageous, direct and aggressive, but when men endowed with these qualities become involved in fighting subversion they often find that their good points are exploited by the enemy. (General Sir Frank Kitson cited in *Security and Stabilisation* 2009a:xvii)

INTRODUCTION

This project is concerned with how the British Armed Forces construct identity in relation to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and particularly the range of non-combat practices which are positioned as central to counterinsurgency warfare. The project looks at population-centred counterinsurgency which moved its focus away from the kill-or-capture of enemy forces, to winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the civilian population. As I previously argued, the need to win over the local populations shifted the priorities for the militaries involved. Language skills, social science analysis, cultural sensitivity, gender awareness, the ability to train, mentor, strategically befriend and build relationships cross-culturally were seen as necessary to win the wars. As the US field manual argues, counterinsurgency is a type of war in which soldiers were expected to be “nation builders as well as warriors” (US Department of the Army 2006: Forward).

This chapter draws on a well-developed feminist literature on war and peace, to show how these practices and roles are gendered, embedded in discourses that link masculinity and combat, femininity and peace. This chapter establishes the feminist approach taken within the thesis, exploring a theoretical approach to gender which contributes to a fuller understanding of contemporary counterinsurgency and situating the thesis within a normative commitment to a politics of peace.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first looks at the understanding of gender and war which underpins the project, looking at the symbolic role that gender plays in the understanding and organisation of conflict. It draws on poststructuralist understandings of gender and identity to argue that the meaning of both gender and war are fluid concepts, subject to change and contestation. It draws on Hutchings (2008a, 2008b) to explore the relationship between war and masculinity, arguing that they have no essential content, but are implicated in mutually definitional relationship. This provides the theoretical underpinning for the project which uses this understanding to look at the shifts in identity construction which make sense of the changing definitions of war.

The second part of the chapter looks specifically at the British Armed Forces. This section serves two purposes. Firstly it provides an understanding of the gendered context of the British Armed Forces, with which the thesis is concerned. Secondly it identifies some of the institutional features of a

military organisation, which serve to (re)inscribe the gendered dynamics of heteronormative masculinity in the face of change.

The third part of the chapter then turns to feminist concerns over the role of the military in projects of peace. It draws work on peacekeeping into the current context of counterinsurgency operations. The peacekeeping operations of the 1990's raised the question of whether soldiers trained for war could also build peace and under what conditions. The counterinsurgency paradigm adds further complexity, as many of the practices of peacekeeping are framed as part of a 'new' kind of war. It is to this question in feminist research that this thesis aims to contribute. Understanding how the military construct the peacebuilding practices offers insight into potential areas of disruption or support to narratives of institutional identity which can constrain or enable military practice on the ground.

2.1 DEFINING GENDER AND/IN WAR

There is an old story about war. It starts with war being conceived of as a quintessentially masculine realm: in it, it is men who make the decisions to go to war, men who do the planning, men who do the fighting and the dying. Men who protect their nation and their helpless women and children, and men who negotiate the peace, divide the spoils, and share power when war is over. (Cohn, 2013:1)

This section explores the interrelated construction of two central terms in the thesis - gender and war, both of which are key to understanding military identity. Whilst most accounts of gender and war begin with an explanation of how gender is understood and used, often the notion of war itself is left unexamined (Hutchings, 2008b:390; Cohn, 2013:21). This section develops an understanding of both gender and war as questionable, flexible, changing and contingent.

The old story of war as a 'quintessentially masculine realm' articulated above is widely accepted, but each aspect has now been subjected to rigorous analysis by feminist scholars in International Relations. The predominance of men as decision-makers and negotiators has been explored and critiqued (Tickner 1992, 2001; Parpart and Zalewski, 1998, 2008) as has the masculine culture of planners and strategists (Cohn, 1987). The role of men as nation's citizens and defenders has been implicated in gendered logics of war (Yurval Davis, 1998; Peterson, 1994; Nagel 1993) as has the masculine logics of protection which underpin state violence (Young, 2003; Steihm 1987). Finally, the predominance of military men, and the masculine understanding of soldiers and warriors has been extensively investigated and theorised (Elshtain, 1987; Stiehm, 2001, Enloe, 1983; Whitworth, 2004; Kovitz, 2003; Bourke, 2000; Goldstein, 2003). These aspects are also investigated in the context of international systems of power, unevenly distributed. Gender is implicated in, and operates through the dynamics of racism, imperialism, colonialism and the globalised flows of wealth which fuel wars (McClintock, 1995; Razack, 2004; Enloe, 1989, 2000; Eisenstein 2004, 2007; Peterson, 2008).

This thesis adopts an understanding of the social world as discursively constituted, and that it is through discourse the world comes into being, and is made intelligible or meaningful. Gender is part of this discursive realm, operating as a system of meaning, functioning to structure ways of understanding and making sense of the world. “Both ideas and materiality” Hansen argues, can be seen as ‘constructed through a discourse which gives materiality meaning’ (Hansen 2006:23). Gender is not emergent from the sexed bodies of people, understood as male and female, but rather is part of the construction of those bodies as male and female, masculine and feminine. As Foucault understands discourses ‘don’t identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention’ (Foucault, 1972:49). So Butler argues the assigning of a gender or sex to a body is an act which itself shapes the body, and it is only through this that bodies are able to be understood (Butler, 1993). Such a process precludes access to the body outside of the discursive understanding, and it leaves other possibilities for bodies unimaginable, and un-liveable (Butler 1993: xi). Gender (and sex) is a system of meaning and subject to change, constructed in a context in and through relationships. It is “historically changing and politically fraught” (Connell, 2005:3).

Establishing gendered binaries

Such an approach in the context of gender and war opens up space for curiosity about the construction of gender, and the persistent relationship to war. Gender can be seen as operating on a symbolic level, embedded in dualistic or binary thinking where sets of ideas are understood as oppositional, mutually exclusive and established in relation to one another (Hooper, 2001:44; Cohn, Hill and Ruddick, 2005:2-3). The characteristics are understood as established in relation to the idea of a dimorphic human body, sexed as male or female, and expressing traits identified as either masculine or feminine. Whilst associated with the body, it extends beyond the imagined body, to disembodied patterns of ideas, characteristics or concepts which are also gendered:

The dichotomy masculine/feminine is linked to other dichotomous pairs, which operate in a similar fashion. Thus such pairs as hard/soft, rational/irrational, strong/weak, tough/tender, culture/nature, mind/body dominant/submissive, science/art, active/passive, inside/outside, competitive/caring, objective/subjective, public/private, abstract/concrete, independent/dependent, aggressor/victim, Self/Other, order/anarchy, war/peace, and prudence/impulsiveness are either used to define masculinity and femininity respectively, or are otherwise associated with them, with the former term always constructed in relation to its opposite, and generally privileged over it.” (Hooper 2001:43-44, see also Cohn, Hill & Ruddick 2005:2-3)

These dichotomous pairs both define or are associated with gender as Hooper suggests above, and conversely their link to gender extends their meaning. Crucially, as Hooper points out, this is also a system of power, where what is linked to the masculine is commonly privileged over the feminine. This is at times concealed, where the feminine can be idealised, valued even without disrupting the balance of power. In the context of war and peace, Elshtain (1982, 1995) demonstrates this with the figures of the ‘beautiful soul’ and the ‘just warrior’. We see women idealised as the beautiful soul,

morally pure, exempted and protected from combat, in a way that also enables the 'just warrior' to act on their behalf. The idealisation of the feminine beautiful soul, however also acts to exclude women from full-citizenship and political decision-making, reinforcing a balance of power which privileges the masculine 'just warrior'.

Understanding gender as a binary structuring within the discourse also makes the relevance of gender to war clear, making visible the gendering of war/peace. Cohn argues that:

War is associated with action, courage, seriousness, destruction, weapons, explosions, violence, aggression, fury, vengeance, protections, mastery, domination, independence, heroism, "doing," hardness, toughness, emotional control, discipline, challenge, adrenalin, risk all terms which are coded "masculine" in most cultures. Peace, in contrast, is associated with passivity, domesticity, family, tranquillity, softness, negotiation, compromise, interdependence, nonviolence, a "being" rather than a "doing," a lack of action, excitement, challenge and risk, an absence rather than a presence – all, in short, coded "feminine" in most cultures. (Cohn 2013:12)

However, whilst prevalent and common, these associations are not fixed, and their coding as masculine or feminine is not universal, even if it is common. There are significant tensions, points of contradiction and change (Hutchings 2008b:392). The gendering, of war and peace, and so the military and the civilian is central to the construction of identity, and the troubling of these boundaries in counterinsurgency warfare which is the concern of this thesis. What happens when war is being associated not with destruction, violence and aggression but rather with cultural sensitivity, mentoring, and understanding? What happens when the binary logics, which are often so accepted as to be invisible, are troubled by practice?

Beyond and between binaries

The stark oppositions of masculine and feminine, war and peace, military and civilian are not the only way of understanding gender, and indeed do not offer a sufficient framework to capture the complexity of gendered identity, and in particular its relations with other systems of power. The gendering of terms, can be seen not only in the opposition of the masculine and feminine, but also the relationships between and within the masculine and feminine. As Hansen (2006) described, identity is constructed through linkages, as well as the differentiations, which is explored more fully in the following chapter.

Rather than a binary understanding of masculinity / femininity, empirical investigations have argued that the multiple and complex constructions of gender mean it makes more sense to speak of masculinities (and femininities) in plural (Brod & Kauffman, 1994; Connell, 1995; Kimmel & Messner 2004). Further, the operation of power is seen not only in the dynamic between a single masculinity and an oppositional femininity, but also within and between masculinities, and femininities. Connell (1987:183-188) articulated the process by which certain configurations of masculinity accrue greater privilege over, and in relation to, other subordinate masculinities, and

femininities as a process of hegemony (borrowing the term from Gramsci, 1971). Hegemonic masculinity is the particular patterning of traits and characteristics with cultural dominance, and which confers privilege on the people, organisations or object which are associated with it, or can embody or enact aspects of it (Connell 1987:183-188, Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005)

In the context of military institutions, many have pointed to particular hegemonic configurations of masculinity as linked to combat, and combat associated practices (Duncanson 2009, 2013; Barrett, 1996; Sasson-Levy, 2003; Woodward 2000). In particular combat forces within the military repeatedly emerge as the 'elite', and receive particular symbolic and material privilege as a result (Stouffler, 1949; Higate 2003b; Sasson-Levy, 2003). However those in non-combat roles, are often seen to still construct an understanding of their own masculinity in relation to hegemonic ideals, emphasising aspects of risk, mastery or control and distancing themselves from subordinate masculine traits or femininities (e.g. 'soft' work, or homosexuality). Barrett (1996) for example outlines the different ways in which US Navy personnel construct masculine identities in relation to hegemonic ideals, constrained by their practice in different roles.

An understanding of the multiple nature of gendered identities makes clear there is no essential or fixed notion of a universal masculine or feminine and the shifting and contingent nature of gender. This makes the relational features of masculinity, both to femininities, and to other configurations of masculinity central to an analysis. This in turn allows for the contradictions within masculinity to be understood. As Hutchings (2008a:29-30) argues it is the formal relations, rather than the substantive properties which account for the persistence of masculinity as a feature of discourse. Hutchings (2008a:390) observes that "The continuum of masculine qualities appears not only to be flexible, but also to contain significant tensions between different elements (e.g., risk taking and rationality or discipline)". This, she argues, "permits distinctions between different, more or less adequate grades of masculinity, in addition to the possibility of failed or deviant modes". Masculinity can be deployed as a means of establishing the distinctions within a hierarchy, between the best and the subordinated means. However, this relies on a logic of contradiction, a distancing from that which is outside the phenomenon being discussed. Masculinity, and the relationship to femininity can establish the "inside and outside of a particular phenomenon (what counts as international politics and what does not) and between good and bad instances of a particular phenomena (good state craft and bad statecraft)" (Hutchings 2008a:30). The implications of this in relation to war are returned to below.

Sasson-Levy (2008) in a military context found that "the soldiers I talked to did not compare themselves to women or homosexuals but mostly to other male heterosexual soldiers who had failed to endure the physical training that is, the fat soldier, the lazy soldier, the "crybaby," or the soldier who is too small." (2008: 306) Whilst she explains this with reference to Connell (1995) and to Kimmel (1996) whose idea of "homosocial enactment" suggests that men define themselves against other men, due to women's inferior status (Sasson-Levy 2008). In light of Hutchings' arguments,

we can see the comparison to other men as defining the inside of the military, and contrast between different men as establishing the ‘good and bad’ instances of appropriate military behaviour.

Cohn argues that the multiple feminist understandings of gender are held together by the ‘conceptual lynchpin’ that gender is a “structural power relation” (Cohn, 2013:4). She stresses the need to understand gender as “a social system which structures hierarchical power relations” (Cohn, 2013:5). Central to recent feminist thought is the interconnection of gender with other social systems of hierarchical power. The gendered binaries and relations described above are simultaneously intertwined with other systems of power and oppression. This is most thoroughly theorised in feminist and critical IR in regard to categorisation of race and class, but also seen in constructions of ability/disability, and deviant/normal sexuality (McClintock, 1995; Enloe, 1989, 2000; Eisenstein 2004, 2007; Puar 2007). The dichotomous pairings above are implicated in, and made sense of through other valued/devalued binaries. So for example stories of disabled or traumatised veterans are often embedded with ideas of ‘emasculatation’, as disabled bodies, victimhood, and interdependence are gendered as feminine, and devalued (Chivers 2009, Carden-Coyne 2014). Stories of veterans overcoming such limitations to complete feats of athletic triumph appeal to particular configurations of masculinity and simultaneously reinforcing gendered links and the valuing of particular bodies and capacities over others.

Welland (2014) shows the way British soldiers feminise the Afghan personnel they train training, constructing them as sexually deviant (see also Manchanda, 2014). The orientalist tropes of an exoticised and erotized easterner, combine with homophobia and a heteronormative masculinity, justifying the British superiority over their ‘uncivilised’ Afghan partners. Writing about earlier British colonial discourse, McClintock shows that gender is not “simply a question of sexuality but also a question of subdued labor and imperial plunder; race is not just a question of skin color but also a question of labor power, cross-hatched by gender”(McClintock 1995:5). The idea of ‘cross-hatching’, the enmeshed nature of race, class, sexuality and ability is key in the context of the British military as an institution, which will be explored more fully in the following section. The way in which gender infuses and is mutually constituted by other systems of oppression adds a necessary complexity to simple binaries and gendered hierarchies. It is not possible to understand constructions of gender without reference to the multiple and interlocking systems of oppression which co-constitute it.

Understanding War

A feminist approach to war, often leads to a questioning of what actually constitutes war. Simple definitions of war as a period of violent conflict between organised armed actors to achieve political ends is called into question by both contemporary conflict and feminist analysis. Cohn (2013:21) points out attention to women’s experiences in war, makes untenable a understanding of war as a discrete event. Rather feminist analysis, and attention to the broader experiences of war will include the processes of militarization of states, identities and economic relations before the official ‘outbreak’

of war, and the persistent insecurity, rehabilitation and reconstruction that continue after a 'peace' may have been formally agreed (Cohn 2013:21, Cohn & Ruddick 2004: 410-11, Cockburn 1998).

The idea of a continuum of war, and persistent conflict, is oddly reminiscent of much of the 'new wars' discourse and the idea of a global (counter) insurgency (Kilcullen 2005, Cassidy 2006). In the new wars paradigms, the boundaries between military and civilian, crime and war are argued to become blurred (Kaldor 2007b:6). Increasingly cyber-attacks, and 'information' campaigns are framed as war, questioning definitions of violence, and territory. It appears that what 'counts' as war, like gender is itself not fixed or certain, but is also contingent and subject to change according to the current political context (Hutchings 2008a, 2008b).

Returning to the insights from Hutchings (2008a, 2008b) explored previously, in this shifting context of war masculinity serves as a 'cognitive short cut'. Masculinity can be a "kind of commonsense, implicit, often unconscious short-hand for processes of explanatory and normative judgement" (2008a:23). It operates as a means to establish what can be understood as war, and the distinctions between types of wars:

To be possible at all, war requires the institutionalization of a range of beliefs, skills, and capacities, which shift according to context. To be grasped and evaluated as a distinctive social practice, war also requires the authorization of a series of discriminations such as between wars fought well or badly, between good and bad war, between war and other forms of organized violence, and between war and peace. Identifying war with masculinity provides conceptual resources that can authorize such discriminations. At the same time, identifying masculinity with war provides a repertoire of possibilities for what masculinity may mean, which occlude the extent to which masculinity is a genuinely empty signifier. (Hutchings 2008b:401)

Here, it is not the constituent content of 'masculinity' per-se, that is the subject of investigation but rather the work that masculinity does. The identification of masculinity and war is mutually constitutive, and the hierarchical constructions of gender explored above, provide a conceptual framework by which war can also be understood. As Cohn (2013:22) argues "we must analyse the processes and institutions that are productive of both war and gender, and the ways in which the two are combined".

It is of particular relevance to the argument of this thesis that military institutions charged with the waging of wars, must first establish what constitutes the war (and peace) and consequently what is military, or civilian. In the context of counterinsurgency warfare, the question of what 'counts' as war is a continual presence in the discourses. In the analysis of doctrine in Part II of this thesis we can see this dynamic playing out. The ambivalence of military institutions and personnel to peacekeeping missions has been made sense of through gendered analysis, which has shown links between understandings of masculinity and combat, and the 'peace' orientation of such projects as feminised (Whitworth, 2004; Sion, 2008). In the discourses of counterinsurgency a similar set of activities to

those of peacekeeping must be reconciled into current practice. Understanding gender and war, as both unstable, shifting concepts and simultaneously as related, or co-constitutive is central to the investigation of military identity and counterinsurgency that this thesis undertakes. Analysing the doctrine which reflects and prescribes how and why these non-combat practices are to be undertaken by the British Armed Forces can only be fully understood with attention to these wider issues at stake: who are the armed forces? what purpose do they serve? and how do they undertake this work? These are questions of identity and practice, which are situated in understandings of war and peace, the military and the civilian, violence and empathy and are symbolically gendered. Further, as the following section shows they also occur in an institution rooted in gendered, raced and classed divisions of labour.

2.2 BRITISH MILITARY NORMS, HEGEMONY AND THE GENDERED INSTITUTION

Whilst the previous section laid out a theoretical approach to war and gender, this section changes tack to focus on the British military as an institution, and the particular configurations of ‘military masculinity’. The previous section argued that there is no stable or fixed content to the idea of gender or war, drawing on Hutchings’ (2008a, 2008b) insights and focussing on their relational and hierarchical aspects. Although maintaining this argument, this section examines the specific institutional context and empirical studies of military masculinity to look at the particular configurations of war and gender in which this project sits. Although fluid and able to change there is a ‘stickiness’ to certain configurations within the discourses of war and gender, which can be traced through the operation of the military as an institution.

The context of the military and doctrine are institutional in that they are ‘simultaneously constraining structures and enabling constructs of meaning and enabling constructs of meaning’ (Schmidt, 2010:4). To examine the discourses of identity in the Armed Forces is also to consider their interaction with and co-constitution of institutional structures (Kulawick 2009). The role of gender is significant here as the “gender relations and norms of masculinity and femininity provide important mechanisms by which particular arrangements and power asymmetries are naturalized and institutionalized, or resisted and discarded” (Mackay, 2009). Whilst allowing that gender and war are systems of meaning discursively constituted, fluid and subject to change, aspects of embodiment, institutions and discourse “constitute a constraining or limiting field within which, or against which, such negotiations take place, whether at the individual or group level”(Hooper 2001:21). This section then aims to explore the existing gendered configurations within the British military, and the institutional changes which are disrupting certain aspects.

Components of a British hegemonic masculinity

There are several studies which look at constructions of masculinity in the British Armed Forces. Whilst most stress the changing nature of masculinity, and the variation, they show a similarity in construction of an identity, which rests on a relationship to heterosexuality and combat. These also

recur in accounts of other national militaries (Gill, 1997; Barrett 1996, Sasson-Levy 2003, 2008) including those which hold an ethos of peacekeeping (Sion 2006, 2008; Whitworth 2004). As Woodward argues:

Definitions vary, but there is a consensus within the gender studies, cultural studies and sociological literatures that there exists an array of gendered cultural attributes informing the practice of military life, identifiable as features of masculine military identity. These attributes include pride in physical prowess, particularly the ability to withstand physical hardships; aggressive heterosexuality and homophobia, combined with a celebration of homosociability within the team; the ability to deeply control physical aggression; and a commitment to the completion of assigned tasks with minimal complaint. (Woodward, 2003: 44)

This seems to be borne out by other work focussing on the UK Armed Services. Duncanson (2009) argues the hegemonic model within the British Army (noting the multiplicity and contradictions) is one of the “soldier as tough, brave, ready for action and also hard drinking, heterosexual and physically fit” (2009:65). Similarly Hockey (2003:19) describes the British infantry soldier’s socialisation based on “physical endurance, aggression, and loyalty to peers” with the recruits coming to view themselves as “rough, tough infantrymen” which is underpinned by “virulently traditional masculinity”). Woodward (1998: 287) shows the countryside is a place where a soldier becomes a man that is “is physically fit, mentally brave, emotionally hard” by embodying “qualities associated with hegemonic masculinity in contemporary Anglo-American culture” adding from Connell (1995) that “he is also independent, risk-taking, aggressive, heterosexual and rational”. For Higate this list is “Physical toughness, aggression, and stoic commitment –“soldiering on” in the face of overwhelming enemy odds” (2003a:27). Peniston-Bird (2003:32) writing about masculinity in World War Two suggests it is “typified by physical and emotional stoicism and heroism, competitive-ness and camaraderie” demonstrating a certain longevity of these traits constructed as military, and masculine.

None of the accounts suggest that any particular serviceperson, male or female, embodies these traits at any one time. Rather, they are stressed as aspirational, idealized or, following Connell (Connell 1987, 1995), hegemonic configurations of masculinity. Rather than a consistent performance by any particular individual, they are socially constructed, not emergent from a biological ‘essence’. Further in many of the accounts the changing nature of the configurations is also highlighted, and a multiple and contingent model of masculinity is deployed. For example Duncanson's (2009) account argues that there is an emergence of a peacekeeping masculinity, in relation to practice on Peace Support Operations, where configurations of practices associated with peacebuilding are also linked to masculinity. Higate (2003) shows the different construction of masculinity of those in clerking roles for the RAF, who as non-combat personnel cannot easily connect their daily work in relation to a combat-based ideal. Hockey (2003) also notes the shifts in acceptable ‘masculine’ behaviour away from risk-taking in training to deployed patrolling where survival is prioritised.

Diversity and tradition

Military masculinity has less to do with men's essential characteristics than it does with the characteristics and assigned meanings of the different world - the military world - that soldiers inhabit (Kovitz 2003:10)

Masculinity appears to have no stable ingredients and therefore its power depends entirely on certain qualities constantly being associated with men" (Hooper 2001:230).

Whilst these two quotes may seem somewhat contradictory, they identify a key tension in feminist writing about the military: the need to contend with both the consistency of certain configurations, whilst simultaneously arguing for their change and contingency. The understanding adopted in this thesis encompasses both aspects – masculinity and war are both discursively produced and constituted without fixed content, and the institutional structures and repeated associations over time constrains change. The repeated associations which co-constitute masculinity and the military include relations to bodies, which are understood as dimorphic, and either masculine and feminine. The British Armed Forces' institutional structures privilege white heterosexual men. The consistency and continuation of that linkage is only partially disrupted by the incrementally increasing numbers of serving women, black and minority ethnic recruits, and the ability of LGBT personnel to serve openly. This is in part due to the ways in which their participation is understood.

The British Armed Forces are predominantly made up of male service personnel. Whilst there is a long history of women employed by, or part of, the uniformed armed services in various guises, the second world war saw larger numbers of women in uniform in the three auxiliary 'Women's Services'. After the Second World War the women's auxiliary services were integrated into the main services, with women's service still restricted to certain roles, and banned from combat. Social movements pushing for gender equality, and possibly in response to difficulties in recruitment the 1980s and 1990s saw the number of roles open to women in the services expanded (Woodward and Winter 2004:281, 284). Despite the majority of roles now being open to women, their numbers are still relatively low at just under 10% overall, with significant different between services. The precise figures, broken down by service are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Showing number of women in the UK Armed Services 2013

		All Service	Naval Service	Army	Royal Air Force
TOTAL	%	9.7	9.1	8.4	13.9
Women					

SOURCE: MoD UK Armed Forces Annual Personnel Report 1 April 2013c

From 1998 women have served in ‘front line’ positions such as piloting combat aircraft or in combat support roles (Woodward and Winter, 2007:34). However women have been and currently are still excluded from ‘ground close combat roles’ where the main function is to ‘close with and kill the enemy’. In the UK Armed forces the current policy excluding women from service in close combat units is not justified on the basis of physical or emotional capacities. Whilst a new review is currently pending, the 2010 review maintained the continuing exclusion of women from ground combat roles due to ‘unknown’ but potential effect on unit cohesion, which may pose a risk combat effectiveness (MoD 2010g:3). The exclusion of women from the UK armed services is thus (officially) justified by potential social impact then rather than their physicality (For which there is little empirical support see Goldstein 2003:182). The exclusion of women from combat serves a particular function, preserving certain areas of the military for men. Writing about the British Army Woodward and Winter (2004) argue:

The opening of combat positions to women is therefore not just another incremental step towards equality of opportunity (such as that taken by opening up artillery and engineering posts to women in 1998), but the breach of a boundary which marks the Army as a masculine preserve. (Woodward and Winter 2004: 294)

The inclusion of women into combat roles, is one that threatens the simple gender dichotomies as understandings of masculinity and the military, women’s presence is understood as a disruptive force (Basham, 2013: 57). Combat is the preserve of men. This is borne out by Basham’s observation that among her research participants women in more combat focussed roles were more likely to experience sexual harassment (Basham, 2013:58), which suggests an informal policing of the boundaries. Not unrelatedly, the exclusion of women from combat roles affects military careers as these roles are often associated with prestige, recognition and promotion (Carrieras, 2006:106)

Whilst women are now achieving higher positions within the British military, they are still remarked upon as exceptional, demonstrated by the press coverage of the promotion of RAF officer Elaine West to Air Vice-Marshal, the highest rank held by a woman in the UK Armed forces (See for example *The sky’s the limit* MoD 2013d; *RAF officer reaches highest rank held by woman* Farmer, 2013 and; *Woman RAF Officer Joins Top Military Brass* BBC, 2013). Conversely the rising fame and popularity of the ‘Military Wives’ a consortium of choirs comprising of the wives and partners of service personnel re-enforced the role of heterosexual military men, and the ‘women left behind’. The choirs were the focus of a popular BBC TV Series and released a single which took the 2011 Christmas number one spot, also being nominated for the Best British Single in the 2012 BRIT Awards. This offers a very prominent story of gendered military life. Concessions to and normalisation of women in the military is also slow. It was only in 2012 that the British Armed Forces issued boots in different width fittings, which are understood to cater for women’s feet “The improved brown boots [...] will be made in two different width fittings, taking into account for the first time the different shapes of men and women’s feet”(MoD 2012a).

The gendered nature of the British Armed Forces as an institution is also seen in the exclusion of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) and Transgender personnel. LGB and Transgender Personnel have been treated differently in military policy, the former describing sexual orientations and the second concerning gender identity. I have split the terms as a result; however transgender personnel are likely to have been subjected to discriminatory legal codes targeting homosexuality. Serving LGB personnel were subject to criminal prosecution and courts martial until 1994, and then following 1994 administrative dismissal if found to be serving. The ban on service continued until 2000 when a European Court ruling found the exclusion discriminatory. Although officially now included and welcomed into the services, there is still an ongoing ambivalence to homosexuality within the British military following the lifting of the ban (Basham 2013: 89-111). The situation for transgender personnel differs slightly, being informal or coincidental prohibition rather than formal exclusion from service. Their inclusion and treatment was clarified with a policy issued in 2009 following several high profile cases, and current official UK military policy is lauded internationally (MoD 2009; Yerke & Mitchel 2013:146-147).

The exclusion of LGB personnel is part of the homosocial structuring of the armed forces, where work, leisure and 'bonding' activities are often organised in single sex environments, often presumed to be heterosexual. Britton and Williams argue that in the US homosocial bonds are called into question by the admission of homosexuality as "the presence of openly gay men in the military contaminates this bond, marring it with implied sexuality. Achievement of military discipline and efficiency is promoted by the military's privileging of heterosexuality" (Britton and Williams, 1995:13). In the UK context Basham (2013:89-111) argues similarly, that exclusion of specifically gay men from the British Armed Forces is due to the impact on (male) homosocial bonding practices common in military settings (where women are, if present at all, still a small minority). This understanding of sexuality is rooted in gendered ideas of the soldier, where LGB sexualities are the antithesis to heterosexual potency. As Basham explains it:

Just as the designation of women as war's witnesses, mothers, sweethearts, nurses and victims constructs men as society's natural protectors, the equation of particular forms of heterosexual manhood with heroism in battle has been reinforced and sustained in the everyday performances of soldiering by British military personnel (Basham, 2013:90)

Sexuality, and the policing of sexual orientation and behaviour within the military both reflects the gendered divisions of labour and sociality within the UK Armed Forces and their role in maintaining them.

There are two other significant areas of change within the British armed forces, in regards to personnel. Firstly the British Armed Forces are also a predominantly comprised of white personnel, with the figures at the end of 2014 noting 7.1% of Regular Armed Forces are Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic, a slight decrease from the previous year. Of these the majority, 57.5%, are from

Foreign and Commonwealth Countries (MoD 2014:25). However, this is a marked change. In 1998 this was a figure of just 1% before a partnership with the Commission for Racial Equality engaged a targeted program of recruitment (Basham 2013:113 see also Dandeker and Mason 2003). Secondly, the historical basis of the Armed Forces is one of stark class divisions. Whilst enlisted personnel are usually from working class backgrounds, officers have tended to be recruited from the upper classes, with a strong relationship between private education and military recruitment, with many private schools having compulsory attendance in Cadet Forces (see Macdonald, 2004 for discussion). However this too seems to have been undergoing some (gradual) change at the beginning of the new millennium with a greater proportion of officers coming from state schools (Zubach & Ishaq, 2000).

This section gave a brief overview of the norms of a British military masculinity – resting on repeated framings of particular configurations of heterosexuality, aggression, combat, and emotional reticence, which are simultaneously troubled by everyday practice. The gradual inclusion of women and LGBT personnel into the British Armed Forces highlights both the previously exclusively male and heterosexual understandings of the military, and the potential for change. Nonetheless, despite these changes, this section has also documented the remarkable persistence and continuity of certain gendered narratives of identity in particular the links between the military and masculinity and the idealisation of combat. This institutional framework, informs the analysis of doctrine in the thesis. Doctrine, as is explored in more detail in the following chapter, comprises documents which both reflect and shape identity and practice. They form an institutional site which tries to reconcile practice with the wider institutional norms and in the case of non-combat counterinsurgency practice, this challenges some of the dominant understandings of the military and civilian. In this section, we see the military understood and bounded as a sphere for heterosexual white men inscribed with class divisions, but also see those boundaries being troubled.

2.3 MILITARY AGENTS FOR PEACE?

Combat is ultimately what armies are for. The primary purpose of an effective army should be the application of force or the threat of force, potentially through combat. (MoD *Operations* 2010e: 8-2)

In the post-Cold War era, UN peacekeeping missions seemed to offer a new direction for military forces. The missions were ostensibly humanitarian, with the majority of peacekeepers being military personnel. Soldiers were deployed to wage peace rather than war. However the practice of peacekeepers on such missions came under scrutiny, particularly from feminists due to the gendered nature of abuses of power. There were growing concerns about sexual exploitation and abuse around military bases, prostitution, and rise in HIV infections (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002:63; Whitworth 2004:13, Allred 2006). In Bosnia peacekeeping forces were reported to have turned a blind eye to human trafficking, and abuse and in some cases participated in or profited from it (Mendelson 2005). Feminists pointed to a prevailing culture of ‘boys will be boys’, rather than investigation into the extent of abuse and harm, and strategies for its amelioration (Whitworth 2004; Martin 2005:4;

Mackay, 2001). The question became could soldiers act as agents for peace? And if so what reforms were needed to prevent abuses of power?

The wars on Iraq and Afghanistan³ and the wider 'War on Terror' are not peacekeeping operations, justified by different logics. The initial combat phases of the wars, particularly in Iraq, were met with some relief from British military personnel, excited about the prospect of 'real war' including the chance to be in combat (Duncanson 2013:77; Duncanson & Cornish 2012:154-156). However, the subsequent occupations, state-building and the population-centred approach to combatting the insurgencies brought many of the practices associated with peacebuilding to the fore. This was not particularly welcome for many British personnel, particularly those in combat roles (Duncanson 2013:95). One sniper Dan Mills writes in an autobiographical account about his frustration in Iraq due to the restrictive rules of engagement that "This place ain't like Bosnia now. It's worse than Bosnia" (Mills 2007: 214, cited in Duncanson 2013:95).

The understandings of peace building are that it requires different skills, attitudes, and identity for military forces, also argued by military personnel themselves (Miller & Moskos, 1995, Whitworth 2004, Sion 2006). As Whitworth suggests that:

Lying at the very core of peacekeeping is a contradiction: on the one hand, it depends on the individuals (mostly men) who have been constructed as soldiers, and on the other hand, it demands that they deny many of the traits they have come to understand being a soldier entails. (Whitworth 2004: 3).

This contradiction rests on a particular construction of the soldier and military work. As the quote which heads this section suggests, combat or the use or threat of force is central to British Armed Forces (examined further in Chapter 4 below). Peace support operations are by contrast peripheral, understood as 'other than war'. Although there is a dominance of a combat-centred identity linking ideas of combat, aggression and emotional distance with masculinity, as previously discussed we also see elements of change and flexibility which are particularly related to military practice (Duncanson, 2007, 2009; Higate 2003; Hockey, 2003). Duncanson (2007, 2009, 2013) shows soldiers can, and do make sense of peacebuilding practice by constructing it as masculine, military and valued. Significant even if this is less dominant than combat linked ideas of masculinity and ultimately the "valorization of warfighting dominates in the discourses over the valorization of activities associated with peace" (2013:101).

Counterinsurgency operations blend combat and the peace building elements in practice. As population-centred counterinsurgency guru Lt. Col Nagl (2007a) said, summarising the new US Field

³ ISAF in Afghanistan was operating as a UN peacekeeping operation, but operating alongside US led Operation Enduring Freedom the situation was confused (see Bellamy, Williams and Griffin 2010:288-298)

Manual and approach its “be polite, be professional, be prepared to kill”. The use of lethal force is blended with the need for increasing ‘polite’ engagement with local populations, and the idea of the professional who can combine and embody the two elements. However it is less clear that military personnel are in practice able to be both trained fighters able to kill on order and simultaneously culturally sensitive, gender aware, relationship-building peacekeepers.

Feminist critiques of peacekeeping operations demonstrate the pervasive narratives of imperial masculinity in framing and understanding the perpetration of abuses by peacekeepers (Whitworth 2004, Razack 2004, Orford 1999). Peacekeeping missions did little to disrupt the military dynamics of power, and were embedded in racial and gendered oppression, and (neo) imperial ambition. Razack (2004) writing about the case of Shidane Arone, a 16 year old Somali boy tortured, and murdered by Canadian peacekeepers as part of a series of incidents involving Canadian forces, documents the prevailing narrative of the civilising white man. She brings Western peacekeeping into the context of Kipling’s (1899) poem the ‘White Man’s Burden’ in which he writes about ‘savage wars of peace’ and the colonial task of civilising ungrateful and unwilling subjects. The ‘White man’s Burden’ Razack argues, is played out in the civilising narratives of contemporary Western peacekeeping (Razack 2004 see also Whitworth 2004, Orford 1999). This narrative, she argues, obscured the abuses that were perpetrated against the Somalian civilians abused, assaulted or murdered, and further obscuring racialized violence within Canadian military, and civilian society (Razack 2004). The colonial and imperial past is also directly present in military counterinsurgency (Khalili 2010a). Much of the ‘best practice’ is drawn directly from colonial practice, and as will be seen in later chapters referenced directly in British doctrine (including Kipling himself). Feminist critiques of neo-imperial aspects of contemporary military practice and liberal intervention are persuasive, linking the structures of military hierarchy with the global dynamics of intervention.

However there is also strong evidence to suggest that peacekeeping operations have assisted in limiting wars, increasing security and preventing genocides (Bellamy, Williams & Griffin 2010:1-2). Feminist accounts also show a deep ambivalence to peacekeeping and the potential for increasing and decreasing security. Whitworth (2004:2) heavily critical of the logics of peacekeeping, found that in Cambodia whilst the local women were critical of peacekeepers and their practices, they didn’t critique their presence. A similar situation found by Cockburn and Hubic (2002) with women activists in Bosnia –they argued that peacekeepers both increased and decreased their security. Such ambivalence is drawn on by feminist theorists to look for the conditions under which militaries can be actors for peace, and how and whether this can be achieved. For peacekeeping, the suggestions vary from shifting training away from combat, to the increased deployment of women to disrupt patterns of masculinity, to the need for cosmopolitan or ‘post-national’ peacekeepers where the links between nation, gender and military are deconstructed (De Groot, 2001; Mackay, 2003; Kronsell, 2012).

The wars on Iraq and Afghanistan and the ‘Global War on Terror’ reinvigorate the potent mix of imperial power, national identity, and gendered tropes. Feminist critiques of the interventions show

how both wars were justified with reference to the raced and gendered ideas of a white, western hero rescuing women (and men) from Muslim savagery (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Al-Ali & Pratt, 2008, 2009; Cloud, 2004; Stabile & Kumar, 2005; Ayotte & Hussein, 2005; Hunt & Rygiel 2006, Shepherd, 2006). The wars rested on racialized tropes of Muslim men as either effeminate or hyper-masculine, and the potential redemptive presence of coalition forces (Khalili 2010b, Manchanda 2014; Welland, 2014).

The devastating impacts of the wars on the civilians, as ‘collateral damage’ have been compounded by abuses perpetrated by US and UK Forces; in particular the systematic prisoner abuse and the documented killing of Abu Mousa in British Custody (Kerr 2008, Bennett, 2013). Yet, despite this the idea of counterinsurgency is suggested as offering a more humanitarian approach to war, one which privileges the (foreign) civilian, above that of the (home) troops (see Sewell 2007). The shift away from enemy-centric or ‘kinetic’ operations typified in the US Counterinsurgency Field Manual (US Dept. of the Army 2006), was part of an understanding of counterinsurgency as a ‘kinder, gentler war’ a myth that obscures the very real violences of such operations (Cohen 2010:75, Gilmore 2011, Dixon 2009, 2012).

The practices advocated in contemporary counterinsurgency are those also associated with peacebuilding. The contradiction between waging war and peacebuilding must be negotiated both by soldiers themselves and more widely in the institution. How they understand this identity – as warrior or peacebuilder, or both warrior *and* peacebuilder and the balance between those elements is one that occurs in relation to practice, and shapes the undertaking, and prioritisation of tasks (as we see in peacekeeping Miller & Moskos, 1995). This thesis, in focusing on the doctrine which mediates understandings of practice, constructs identity, aims to provide insight into the dynamic, and is one which a gendered approach is necessary to make sense of. Whitworth concludes her volume by arguing that:

Caring, emotive human beings who feel a connection with other human beings are not, it seems, what most militaries are looking for. The ultimate irony of course, is that these may be the very qualities that are required of anyone involved in missions aimed at keeping, creating, promoting or maintaining something called *peace* (Whitworth 2004:172 emphasis in original)

What has happened in Counterinsurgency rhetoric is that caring and emotive human beings are now becoming a necessary not for *peace* but also for winning at *war*. They are what the military wants, but simultaneously their relationship to peace is at question. This provides a very different context under which to consider the possibility of soldiers for shifting identities and adoption of a different skillset in relation to the wars.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted three areas of feminist theory and thought which underpin the research in this thesis. Firstly it highlighted the discursive understandings of gender and war, which underpin the project. It argues that neither masculinity nor war have fixed meanings but are changing, and contingent. Drawing from Hutchings's (2008a, 2008b) the relational properties of masculinity are seen as offering a conceptual resource. The gendered opposition of masculine and feminine, associated with war and peace offers a means to distinguish what 'counts' as war. Simultaneously, the multiple and changing nature of what constitutes 'masculinity' allows for a hierarchy of war to be understood: 'good' wars and 'bad' wars. Such an approach is used to understand the role of gender in contemporary counterinsurgency operations, which reframe activities previously understood as 'other than war' as war.

The second part of the chapter looked at the empirical work specifically on the British institutional context. Despite the changing and changeable understandings of masculinity and the military, there is considerable continuity in the idealised accounts of military masculinity – which rest on the linking of combat and masculinity. This is strengthened through the systematic exclusion, and selective inclusion of women into the armed forces, and in particular to combat roles. Further, increasing acceptance of LGBT personnel suggests a lessening of focus on heterosexuality in the military, demonstrating the possibility for change.

The final section of the chapter looked at the relationship of the military to peacekeeping. The counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, in addition to their combat aspects, incorporated significant areas of practice from peacekeeping operations, yet reframed them as part of war. Feminist critiques of peacekeeping point to the abuses perpetrated by peacekeepers and the imperial logics of masculine protection that fuelled them. Further, they argue that military personnel, trained for war, are not easily retrained to act for peace. The question of what reforms are possible for military personnel to act as agents of peace are relevant to the contemporary counterinsurgency campaigns. Despite the neo-imperial context of the wars, the tasks being asked of personnel have the potential to destabilise the understandings of military interventions and to open up space for different understandings of military practice on the ground.

The feminist understanding developed in this chapter provides the underpinnings for this project, which in the following chapter are brought into conversation with the methodological concerns and approach. A feminist attention to the gendered and raced structures of counterinsurgency and the wider narratives of liberal peacekeeping can make sense of the tensions and contradictions seen in the doctrine analysed. Understanding the discursive construction of both masculinity and war makes visible the elastic and contested nature of both. Understanding of what comprises masculinity and what comprises war are both subject to change. However, as we see in the doctrine this change must be made sense of. By paying close attention to the relationship of masculinity, practice and war we can see the particular configuration in relation to recent counterinsurgency practices.

CHAPTER 3. DOCTRINE AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter developed the theoretical framework which underpins the thesis. This chapter builds from that developing the design of the research and analytical framework. Population-centred counterinsurgency, and the military interest in ‘culture’ marked both a move away from a technological focus of conventional warfare. The counterinsurgency paradigm built from broader ideas of ‘new war’ a wider shift from interstate to intra-state conflict, including peacekeeping, and humanitarian intervention. The substantial commitment of British forces to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the particularities of their practice ‘on the ground’ and their rhetorical framing in international, domestic and military spheres offers a challenging context for the formation of military identities. The broad research question this project seeks to answer is how has the British armed forces constructed its identity in relation to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? The particular focus on the ‘population’ and ‘culture’ which quickly gained traction in the popular press and political rhetoric leads to the secondary question of how are the non-combative practices associated with these responses, understood in an institution whose *raison d’être* is ostensibly combat?

This chapter describes the research design and methodology developed and used in the thesis to answer these questions. The first part introduces doctrine as the focus of the thesis, exploring what defines doctrine, and the particular context of British Armed Forces’ doctrine. The second part focuses on the data collection and engagement with the military, following a loosely chronological structure which shows the development of the research process through its original formulation as fieldwork to the emergence of the eventual focus on select doctrines. The third section looks at the analytical framework used to read the doctrine, building from the work of Hansen (2006) and Duncanson (2009, 2013) to adopt a rigorous discourse analysis approach. It details the development of a framework of ‘Three Questions’ used to capture the interplay of practice and institutional identity. The aim of this chapter is to introduce doctrine as a site of study and to detail the decision making processes and strategy adopted. These underpin the thesis to allow for the evaluation of the resulting arguments.

3.1 DOCTRINE

The research questions bring together identity construction and military practice. This section explores what doctrine is, how it has developed in the British Armed Forces, and why it is a productive site to study identity construction in relation to practice in the military. Farrell observed there is a tendency that ‘people can mean different things when they talk about doctrine’ and this is borne out by a small literature which deals with doctrine (Farrell cited in Daddow 2002). Whilst Avant (1993:410) argues that most scholars agree “doctrine falls between the technical details of tactics and the broad outline of grand strategy” there are actually a range of descriptions which seek to

pinpoint what doctrine is and how it is identifiable. These range from the conceptual, such as Fuller's (1923 cited in Sheffield 2010:2) definition of doctrine as the "central idea of an army"⁴ to the romantic such as Naval Commander Corbett's "Doctrine is the soul of warfare" (Corbett 1914: 24) and from the simplified "that which is taught" (British Defence Doctrine 1997) to more elaborate definitions which seek to include practice, or action.

Some of the difference in definitions is explained in the distinction between informal, semi-formal and formalised doctrine. This distinction is drawn as the difference between implicit and explicit by Storr (2007). He argues "Many armies have implicit doctrine. Their officers share a common view of what to do, which is not written down and made explicit. It is based on 'the way things are done' and which are taught at officer academies and Staff Colleges, which is in turn based on 'the way things have been done'" (Storr 2007:189). In the literature on doctrine or military behaviour the term doctrine is often deployed to describe or refer broadly to a set of existent thinking and practices which are performed by the military in the pursuit of a particular objective. In this way it refers to what is established as the ways of 'thinking and doing' within the military. For example Eisenstadt and Pollack (2003) use the term to track the way Soviet practices, thinking and tactics -understood together as doctrine- were adopted (or not) into Arab armies during the Cold War (see also Kier 1999, looking at British and French interwar doctrine again referring to the practices and ideas as used).

In contrast 'there has always been a strong element of the written word to doctrine' (Johnston 2000:30) and a considerable body of literature tends to use doctrine as formally produced and codified written texts. Hoiback (2013) exemplifies this citing military historian Richard Holmes to produce a definition that a doctrine is "a document containing 'an approved set of principles and methods, intended to provide large military organizations with a common outlook and a uniform basis of action'" (Hoiback 2013:9). So when Sheffield (2010) describes the reinvention of the British Army as a "doctrinally-based organisation" as a profound revolution in approach he refers not to the adoption of a particular new doctrine, thinking, or practice itself but rather the institutional shift to produce and structure British military *thinking and practice* as a set of authorised written documents.

The definition of doctrine as 'what is taught' used in the first formulations of British military doctrine (*Design for Operations* 1989, *British Military Doctrine* 1997) is more expansive, and brings in the institutional elements of doctrine, including a wider span of teaching materials. This includes seminal texts circulated and used in military training and educational establishments. As the British Armed forces have at times relied solely on informal or semi-formal texts, studying 'what is taught' offers necessary insight into their military thinking and practice. These definitions of doctrine as 'thinking and practice', as 'authorised documents' and as 'what is taught' highlight the complexity of doctrine

⁴ Used by Sheffield (2010:2) in an essay on doctrine included in the British Army Doctrine Publication *Operations* (MoD 2010e)

as a site of study. The following section looking at the evolution of British military doctrine uses all three, before returning to the problem of definition again.

DOCTRINE AND THE BRITISH ARMED FORCES

The first instances of written British military doctrine are arguably the British Army Field Service Manuals published periodically between 1909 and 1935. There is a surprising continuity in the approach to written doctrine between these manuals and their present day incarnations in arguing for the necessity of authoritative doctrine. The opening paragraph of FSM 1909 states that:

The principles given in this manual have been evolved by experience as generally applicable to the leading of troops. They are to be regarded by all ranks as authoritative, for their violation, in the past, has often been followed by mishap, if not by disaster. They should be so thoroughly impressed on the mind of every commander that, whenever he has to come to a decision in the field, he instinctively gives them their full weight. (1909 FSM in Pugsley 2011:10)

British military doctrine in the early stages of the Second World War has been widely critiqued as being unresponsive to the changes in operating environment, focussed too heavily on the trench warfare of the First World War campaigns, and not adapted to the new realities of manoeuvre warfare (Steele 2004, Bond 1980, Murray 1998, Winton 2000). However Johnston (2000) revisited this early written doctrine, and noted substantive change between 1929 and 1935 versions of *Field Service Regulations II*, which showed influence from the manoeuvrist school of thought, which crucially wasn't enacted in practice. Regardless of the shift in *written* doctrine, the training and behavioural adaptation were slower to follow, echoed in recent critiques of mismatch between counterinsurgency doctrine and practice (see King 2010 on UK use of Forward Operating Bases in Afghanistan). The FSM's were discontinued after the Second World War, and instead an ad-hoc collection of pamphlets, books and experience was used in the articulation and dissemination of a pragmatic doctrine as 'what is taught'. Officially authorised written doctrine publications were established again in 1988 with the first issue of Joint Doctrine *British Military Doctrine*, and the British Army producing *Design for Military Operations* in 1989. *British Military Doctrine* was replaced by the 1st Edition of British Defence Doctrine in 1996, and that publication is currently on its 4th Edition. The output of doctrine, both Joint and Single Service has steadily expanded, and is being standardised and organised. This expansion is described by Sheffield (2010) as a move towards being a doctrinally-based organisation.

The Field Service Manuals did not cover irregular warfare. In relation to counterinsurgency and other forms of irregular warfare however, there were written sources of guidance such as Callwell's *Small Wars* ([1896]2010). These were at times classed as doctrinal, following the definition of 'what is taught', and are recognised as a way of exploring historic military thinking and practice and establishing a tradition which informs contemporary military thought. Texts that are particularly influential on contemporary doctrine are Robert Thompson's *Defeating Communist insurgency; the lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* ([1966] 2005) and Frank Kitson's *Low Intensity Operations*:

Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping (1971). Both of these texts are cited in current doctrine, and multiple times in Joint Doctrine Publication *Security and Stabilisation* (2009a).

DOCTRINE, THE MILITARY INSTITUTION & IDENTITY

Whilst the thesis engages with end products of the contemporary British military doctrine their relationship to current ‘thinking and practice’ and their writing to be ‘what is taught’ is central to their role in institutional identity. The processes leading to the establishment of a doctrine as agreed, formalised and published, the subsequent dissemination as a text to be read, taught and shared, and the ongoing review, contestation, and revision – are part of the analysis of doctrine as a site of study for identity formation, and part of the structure of the British Armed Forces.

Contemporary written doctrine reflects and prescribes particular approaches, thinking and practices to aspects of warfare and military organisation. It enables a common framework for practice across a large organisation of many parts, and as well as day-to-day practice doctrine also covers higher levels of decision-making. As Sheffield (2010e:E3) argues it “should permeate the language and thinking of those in high command”. Its role is extensive covering a range of institutional levels and purposes that makes it particularly useful to study the approach to identity construction in the military. As Daddow points out:

[D]octrine is more than a collection of standard operating procedures. It is a highly political and politicised entity, operating on all the levels of war and seeking to develop a philosophy and attitude of mind for members of the armed forces as much as it lays down sets of technical recommendations. (Daddow 2002: 158)

Similarly Duncanson (2009:73) argues that “military doctrine is not just a list of instructions and guidelines; it is written for a whole variety of other reasons: to set the tone of military culture, to motivate and train soldiers, and to persuade, convince and impress the wider audience”. These are documents that have a central role: in military education, in practice, in formulating and disseminating ideas, ethos and identity. In this thesis doctrines are seen as living documents, being refined by practice, but also shaping it (see Hunter 2008 for another formulation of a ‘living’ document).

The engagement with the British Armed Forces during the research process was largely through educational establishments, and with personnel involved in teaching or learning. The initial contacts for my research were in part facilitated by a military-academic conference (The Gulf and the Globe II, 2010). Of the military sites visited most were related to education or training: The Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC) provides education to higher ranked staff and commanders, the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) provides a masters level course for military, civilian and corporate defence elites, and the Reinforcements Training and Mobilisation Centre (RTMC) is an educational site, providing area-specific training to personnel before they deploy. Further, the British contacts in the *NATO Training Mission – Iraq*, and the visiting Iraqi generals, were also working to establish ‘modern and professional’ military education and training centres in Iraq. In these contexts

doctrine was present to varying extents – whether actively taught or passingly referenced. The concern with ‘what was taught’ in relation to counterinsurgency, and about the populations to be ‘centred’ was evident in the discussions of specific published doctrines and daily experience. In particular the prominent US Counterinsurgency Field Manual (US Dept. of the Army 2006) was a regular point of reference, along with the British publications.

The relationship of doctrine to the wider British military and understandings of practice are also at times ambiguous and ambivalent, with many personnel resistant to reading them and even arguing their irrelevance to the experience on the ground (Harvey & Wilkinson 2009). This is evident in the self-conscious rebuttal of attacks within the doctrine publications themselves. This seems to be most apparent in Army Doctrine, where soldier’s resistance or reluctance to engage with doctrine is met with firm admonishments. This is often with reference to the quote attributed to German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel that “The British write some of the best doctrine in the world; it is fortunate their officers do not read it” (in *Army Doctrine Primer*, MoD 2011c:I; *Operations*, MoD 2010e:2-4; and *Understanding* MoD 2010c:4-2). Rather, in the UK the emphasis has been on pragmatism and learning from institutional processes, rather than prescribed texts (Sheffield 2010:2, although this is a point of controversy see Latawski 2011, Pugsley 2011). This links to the idea of ‘Officering’ as work for the ‘gifted amateur’, a point firmly refuted in the Chief of Defence Staff Forward to the recent edition of Army Doctrine Publication *Operations* (2010: iii) who stated there is ‘is no place in today’s Army for the gifted amateur’ (see also Beevor 2000:64). The shifts into formalised written doctrine have been accompanied with an associated discourse of modern, professional soldiering and officering:

Many of you will share my concern about the reluctance of some to read and apply doctrine. You will see from the essay at the end of this publication that this is not a new problem. But there is no place in today’s Army for the gifted amateur. We must get better at studying the profession of arms and establishing greater coherence and consistency in how we operate, across our activities. While this doctrine emphasises the importance of minimising prescription, the land operating environment is just too dangerous and complicated to make it up as we go along. I see the chain of command at both formation and regimental level playing a key role in educating subordinates in the importance and application of the key tenets of doctrine. This is a habit we must all acquire. This capstone doctrine drives our tactical doctrine and its practices. It also helps to explain what the Army is for. There is a professional obligation on you to read, to understand, and to be guided by this book and to ensure that those under your command do the same. (Sir Peter Wall CGS, *Operations* 2010e:iii)

The above quote, taken from a key doctrine publication responds to a perceived reluctance to engage with doctrine, and balanced a fine line between avoiding prescription but also in establishing consistency. The central appeal is one to professionalization, a theme which is explored within this thesis. It is clear that both individual doctrine documents and the increasing role of written doctrine as an organising principle, is resisted and challenged. As a result the tenets established in authorised

doctrine are not going to be simply translated into practice on the ground or indeed vice versa. The argument here is not that there is a simple relationship of doctrine to practice; that what works on the ground is translated into a document, disseminated, and then widely practiced. Rather that this idealised mechanism is important to an analysis of how doctrine is understood within the official military discourse, i.e. as influential documents for communicating and mediating ideas about practice. However it would be unreliable to explore practice itself, and this is not how doctrine is studied within the thesis. Rather, doctrine is analysed in this thesis for how practices are articulated and understood, and the interrelations of this with military identity.

Mungo Melvin, retired British Army general and military historian, lamented the fact that there are 'those who confuse doctrine with dogma or misunderstand its central purpose' (cited in Daddow 2002). This links into the repeated assertions across the doctrine of the flexibility, evolutionary nature, and need to apply judgement in approach. Whilst doctrine sets out desired ways of approaching, thinking, and practicing in military situations and activities it also stated that it is intended as guidelines and principles, it's not rules.

A further reason for focussing on doctrine, which became apparent as I investigated the field further, was a lack of writing *on* doctrine. Whilst there is considerable debate about the content or character of specific doctrine and some discussion of how doctrine can be used, and its relationship to practice, these analyses tend to emerge from military scholars, and are situated within strategic studies (such as Griffin, 2011, Kier, 1995, or Bulloch, 1996). With some notable exceptions (Hoiback, 2013; Daddow, 2002, 2003) there is little critical literature, which looks at the broader relations of doctrine to the military institution. This thesis then is a contribution to fill that gap, with the analysis of doctrine as a site of institutional identity construction.

CONTEMPORARY DOCTRINE DOCUMENTS: ORGANISATION, FORM & STRUCTURE

Contemporary written doctrine for the British Armed Forces is a large and complex body of documents, which has evolved from a range of sources and is being continually revised and updated. This in part leads to my characterisation of doctrine as living documents; they are amended or modified in relation to practice. Doctrine covers the full range of military activity, at different levels of specificity. These areas and levels, and the structuring of doctrine are explored in this section.

There are three main sources of UK doctrine⁵: NATO, the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre and Single Service Warfare Centres. NATO produces doctrine which may be authored, or

⁵ There are other sources of multinational doctrine and standards, which supplement NATO: The Quinquartite Combined Joint Warfare Conference (QCJWC) (UK, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). The American, British, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Armies (ABCA) organisation, Air and Space Interoperability Council (ASIC) and AUSCANZUKUS a Maritime coordination.

adopted by the UK Armed Forces. At times additional national elements, caveats or reservations are added to the original text. These documents are called ‘Allied Joint Doctrine’ or AJP, or at lower levels ‘Allied Tactical Publications’ (ATPs) or ‘Allied Tactics, Techniques and Procedures’ (ATTPs). The purpose is to facilitate joint operations between the allies. As the focus of this project is specifically on British identity, an early decision was made to exclude Allied publications, and they are only mentioned briefly in the thesis.

The Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) is the body responsible for managing UK doctrine overall. It is staffed by personnel from all three services and headed by a person of Two Star Rank. It is located at a defence site in Shrivenham, as part of the Defence Academy which also houses the Joint Services Staff and Command Courses. The DCDC is described as a MoD ‘think tank’ (MoD 2014) and oversees and/or authors the Joint Doctrine Publications and Notes including the three documents analysed in this thesis. These are UK national doctrine and are applicable to the Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Special Forces. Joint Doctrine Publications were previously named Joint Warfare Publications (JWPs) and this terminology is still present.

Each of the three services also produces their own doctrine, and takes the lead in developing some Joint Doctrine in specialist area. Each Service has a ‘Warfare Centre’ – the Land Warfare Centre, The Maritime Warfare Centre and the Air Warfare Centre. At the higher levels the Army produce Field Manuals (AFMs) and Royal Navy Publications (CB, CBd, BR, BRd⁶) and the RAF Air Publications (APs). These sources are summarised in Figure 1.

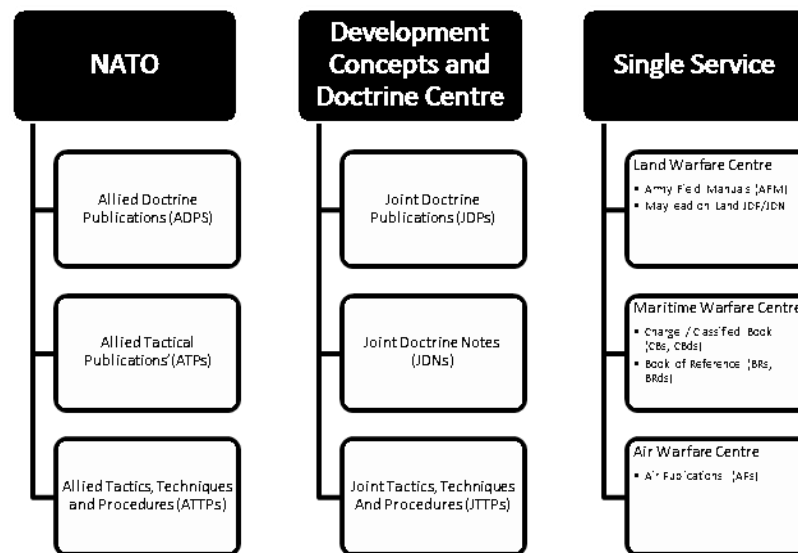


Figure 1. Sources of Doctrine

⁶ Charge / Classified Book, and Book of Reference

The Joint Doctrine and Single Service Doctrine are arranged hierarchically, both internally and in relation to each other, with Joint Doctrines taking precedence over single service. There are several different kinds of organisation at work within the structuring of the doctrine. The clearest is that of the 'levels of warfare': strategic, operational, tactical. Strategic refers to the highest level of warfare, the use of force to achieve the overall political objectives, and looks at the broad configuration and deployment of force. Tactics on the other hand, refers to the lower level decisions or practice to achieve short term, immediate goals (e.g. patrol formations). The operational level is situated between the two – arranging tactics to achieve strategic gains at the unit level. In UK doctrine this organisational structure is also overlaid with a 'conceptual hierarchy' which runs Philosophy, Principles, Practises, Procedures. The MoD guide produced for those authoring doctrine includes the diagram reproduced as Figure 2 which shows the relationship between the two hierarchies.

Level of doctrine	Scope	Method of adoption	Output	Effect
High-level (strategic)	Describe what you think about (philosophy) and how to think (principles)	Educate and assimilate	Common framework of understanding	External influence
Theatre-level (operational)			A way (not <i>the way</i>) of approaching a problem	Guidance A basis for initiative
Low-level (tactical)	Prescribe what to do (practice) and how to do it (procedures)	Train and practise	Propagate best practice	Effective conformity
		Standard language and process	Common plane of thought	Synergy

Figure 2. "Military Doctrinal Characteristics" reproduced from MoD 2013b:1-6

The diagram not only shows the relationship between the levels of war and the conceptual hierarchy, but also shows the ways in which these will be adopted and the desired effect.

Across the levels of doctrine, the level of detail and specificity of guidance provided increases as you move down the hierarchy. Personnel are not expected to read all doctrine but those relevant to their rank and role, and the doctrine reflects this. Whilst all the doctrine is engaged with practice – whether cognitive or bodily, generally the lower level tactical doctrine focusses on the latter in a more prescriptive manner. For example the Army Field Manuals are situated broadly at the operational and tactical level and so detail particular battle tactics, formations and actions, specifying who should take on what role, and in what order. The volume covering specific areas (e.g. Desert or Cold Weather)

also have sections which set out necessary procedures for maintaining the health of personnel (e.g. adjusting fluid or food intake). Higher level strategic doctrine does not include this level of detail.

Further to these clearly hierarchical relationships is a further division into ‘types’ of doctrine. These three types are functional, thematic and environmental. Functional Doctrine corresponds to the organisational divisions within the military, which are referred to as the “J1-J9”. These are organisational designations used throughout the services and joint service structures. These cover areas such as personnel, intelligence, or logistics⁷. In the doctrine hierarchy these are labelled with the corresponding number e.g. *Joint Doctrine Publication 2-00 Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations* corresponds to J2 Intelligence or *Joint Doctrine Publication 3-00 Campaign Execution* to J3 Operations.

Thematic doctrine relates functional doctrine to a specific context, or “provides a guide to dealing with a particular set of conflict themes” (Maritime Primer 2013). So *Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40 Security and Stabilisation* relates the functional doctrine of operations into the context of stabilisation. The number designation before the dash signals the ‘J’ area, the number after is specific to this doctrine. For the remainder of the thesis, to avoid unnecessary confusion I will not use the acronyms and numerical designations unless pertinent, but use the title of the doctrine italicised. A full list of the doctrine is provided as an appendix.

Environmental doctrine focuses on a uniting environment: maritime, land, air and space, information (including cyberspace) or Special Forces. These doctrines are often produced by the relevant service with expertise. These doctrines, whilst aimed at a joint service audience, also form the top of the hierarchies for the single service doctrine. The terminology of ‘Capstone’ and ‘Keystone’ doctrine is also used to describe doctrine publications, and how they function in the hierarchy in relation to other doctrine. Capstone indicates the top of a hierarchy, and a keystone publication is one that links others together.

There is also a distinction between Joint Doctrine Publications (JDPs) and Joint Doctrine Notes (JDNs). Joint Doctrine Publications are fully authorised doctrine, Joint Doctrine Notes are not and serve one of two functions. Either they fulfil a need for doctrine guidance at short notice, as they can be raised more quickly than would be possible for fully authorised doctrine or as a necessary stop gap or interim measure as a main doctrine is being reviewed, written or substantially amended. The resulting JDN may be revised and become a fully authorised JDP in its own right, incorporated into a revision of an existing JDP or be discontinued if its purpose becomes redundant. Alternatively

⁷ The complete set of areas are: J1 – Personnel; J2 – Intelligence; J3 – operations; J4 – logistics; J5 – plans; J6 – communications and information technology; J7 – training; J8 – resource management; J9 – civil military cooperation.

JDN's are also used as discussion documents, or to "put down 'markers in the sand' and promote debate" (MoD 2013b:1-6). JDPs go through a lengthy formal writing process, taking a minimum of 12 months from proposal to publication. Both a study draft (possibly multiple study drafts) and a ratification draft must be circulated to the Joint Doctrine Steering Committee, which is chaired by the DCDC and the membership of which is drawn from senior staff from across the joint and single service structures. JDNs do not have to go through this ratification process, but are still subject to an 'approval process and must be signed off by the DCDC's Head of Doctrine, Air and Space.' (MoD 2013b:2-1). These documents are still proposed through, authored and formally approved by the DCDC and they are widely circulated and used. On this basis they have been included as part of my analysis as their lack of full endorsement does not detract from their involvement in the construction of identity. Their shorter publication schedule means they are potentially more reactive, and reflective of current thinking than older JDPs and form part of the military adaptation to new operational demands.

The organisation and logic of doctrine is complex, and these hierarchies often overlap. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) *Operations* for example, is both the capstone document for the Army, but also the Joint Doctrine Publication for the land environment. The structures are the result of an ongoing process of producing, revising and restructuring doctrine, rather than of specific design. Doctrine is gradually revised and updated. Changes in one document, impact other related documents. So that changes in one document, such as a new official definition or term, ripple out over time as others are revised. This will be discussed further below.

Due to the complexity of doctrine, there have been guides produced: the Army publication *Doctrine Primer* (2011) and the more recent *Maritime Doctrine Primer* (2013). These are effectively 'guides to the guidance' and are both substantial documents in their own right. They give an overview to the organisation of doctrine, defend its importance, describe its structure and use, and summarise key content. In addition, there is the *Developing Joint Doctrine Handbook* (2013), which is included in the doctrine hierarchy and explains the standardised process of producing and organising doctrine for those involved.

At the apex of the various strands of the doctrine hierarchy is the crucial publication *British Defence Doctrine*. *British Defence Doctrine* is the 'capstone' document, and lays out the overall strategic and philosophical approach of the British Armed Forces. The other doctrines are arranged under it according to the logics set out above. Figure 3 on the following page shows the hierarchical organisation of select doctrine, and their relationship to each other. The following section turns to the research journey, looking at how the eventual focus on documents emerged during the research process, culminating in the selection of doctrine to analyse.

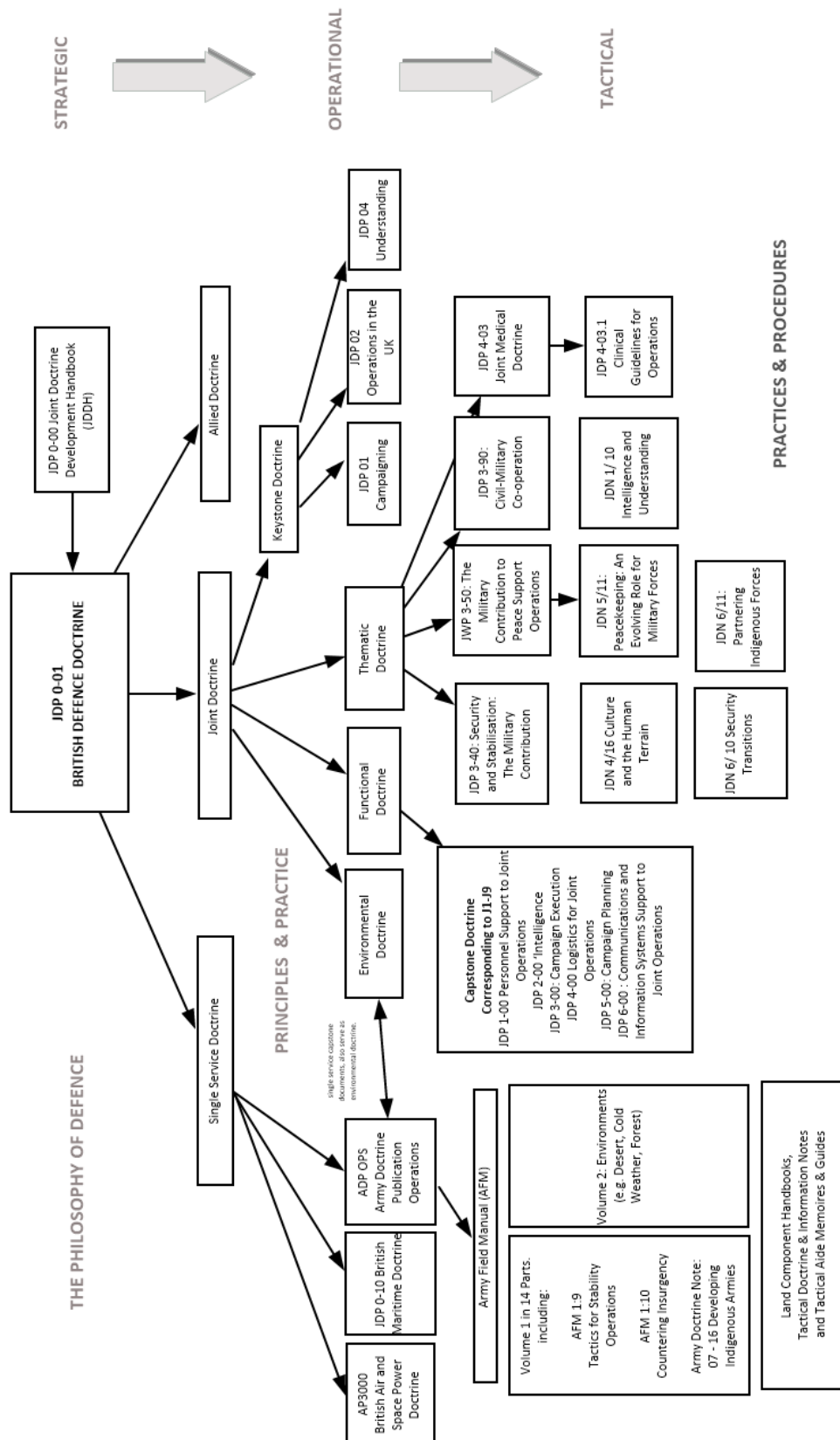


Figure 3 Showing Select Examples of Contemporary Doctrine Output and rough example of hierarchical organising principles

3.2 RESEARCH JOURNEY: FROM DOCUMENTS TO FIELDWORK AND BACK AGAIN

The journey of the thesis has been a lengthy evolution from its origins. Initially the project focussed on the training and mentoring of Iraqi Armed Forces. My specific focus on Iraq, rather than Afghanistan reflected a background in Arabic language and area studies, including tuition from a former MoD Arabic instructor. The original research design was based on documentary analysis but during the course of the first year it quickly evolved as positive engagement with military personnel and civilian staff made fieldwork in Iraq a possibility. The largest contingent of British Personnel deployed to Iraq at the time was the Royal Navy led multinational training mission at Umm Qasr and the project developed a naval focus. The new research plan included data collection based on semi-structured interviews and observation. This was to be conducted largely within the International Zone in Baghdad, with security-dependent visits out to other training sites, shadowing British personnel working under the NATO Training Mission - Iraq (NTM-I). British combat forces had withdrawn at this time, and personnel were there as part of the NATO training mission supporting US led operations. This fieldwork was arranged with the British Armed Forces, and was very nearly realised. However, despite having attended a three day Pre-Deployment Training for civilians going out with the Armed Forces and being issued with kit, a last minute bureaucratic difficulty over insurance and liability postponed the initial departure date. Following this, the worsening of the security environment in Iraq at the time caused further delays. As time went on the short UK deployment cycle meant in-country contacts finished their tours. Eventually, after a period of seven months of 'almost' going, my helmet and body armour were starting to gather dust. The financial and personal cost of 'life on hold' made fieldwork no longer viable to pursue. The project had to be reimagined again.

During this time of intensive engagement with the British Armed Forces, a large amount of data was also collected. Although the visit to Iraq was not realised, the engagement with the British Armed Forces was incredibly valuable. During this time, I made visits to the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC) in Shrivenham, also visiting RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire, the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) in London, and the Reinforcements Training and Mobilisation Centre (RTMC) in Nottinghamshire. These visits included a number of informal engagements – lunch with forces from India undergoing training, coffee and drinks receptions with high ranking naval officers, discussion with military publishers about what books were selling, meeting officers fresh from Sandhurst, and tea breaks spent with military civilian analysts, translators, MoD lawyers and accountants. There was even the awkward half hour waiting in car park making conversation with a private specialist driver. All of these engagements helped me to form an understanding of the British Armed Forces and wider defence sector from a human and embodied perspective.

Two trips were particularly insightful. I spent a day with a group of high ranking Iraqi Generals brought to tour UK defence education establishments, with a view to informing the establishment or

development of their Iraqi equivalents. The human dynamics of the often stilted relationship between the British and Iraqi Staff, with uneven language gaps, facilitated through a bored and resistant Lebanese translator, was eye opening. This fuelled my developing interest in the doctrine *Partnering Indigenous Forces*. I felt that the British officers were following a particular script, a point that wasn't lost on the Iraqi generals.

Secondly, the three day pre-deployment training course was also very helpful. The civilian course was a shortened version of that provided to military personnel before deployment. The long days covered a range of topics including battlefield first aid, vehicle and weapons recognition, sexual health, what to do if taken hostage, mine clearance, and checkpoint procedure. One session was delivered on 'Afghan Culture' as most of those on the course were headed to Camp Bastion in Helmand, Afghanistan. This was delivered by a civilian Afghan man who gave a confusing lecture, combining anecdotes with cultural 'do's and don'ts'. His own position as an upper class man from Kabul, clearly influenced the content. The session was critiqued on the feedback forms by the civilian attendees, many of whom had completed previous tours. This resulted in a discussion at the end of the course with the commander in which he highlighted an ongoing process of trying to improve how they 'did' culture. Another session addressed 'British military values' which was adapted to present military values to the civilian audience. The themes of the presentation reflected *British Defence Doctrine* and demonstrated the way in which doctrine can be translated into a training environment. Throughout this period I kept field notes, expecting these to continue throughout the fieldwork in Iraq.

I also collected a number of documentary sources during this time. Semi-official documents included timetables, planning documents, course syllabi and reading lists, conference programmes, emails and pamphlets issued 'pre-deployment'. I also collated copies of 'The Adviser', a magazine produced by United States Forces - Iraq, Deputy Commanding General (Advising and Training) Public Affairs, and some 'informal' news sheets from Iraq. I also received copies of the Royal United Service Institute Journal, and had access to the British Army Review. These latter two journals provide a view of the debates and discussions around British Armed Forces policy, practice and thinking during the period.

The final set of data collected during this time was a range of doctrine publications and notes, and their supporting documents (such as guides, additional case studies and essays). Many of these are publically available and published online, others were subject to restrictions. When it became clear that the fieldwork was not going to be possible, this range of data – field notes, documents and doctrine – were systematically re-read and catalogued into a spreadsheet. This formed the basis of deciding what would be the focus of the resulting discourse analysis and focus of the thesis: doctrine.

Whilst the focus has shifted to an analysis of doctrine, I have returned to both my field notes and the other documentary sources throughout my analysis of formal doctrine. Primarily they informed the selection of doctrine to analyse in depth, explained below. In addition they were periodically revisited to keep a sense of contact with the wider environment in which the doctrines are situated. Whilst not

analysed directly, experiences during the fieldwork and some of the documents amassed, are occasionally referenced in the chapters analysing the doctrine.

WHICH DOCTRINES?

There is a substantial range of doctrine published by the British armed forces, as previously discussed. Throughout the period of data collection, particular themes and repeated constructions became apparent. Having decided to focus the analysis on doctrine as practice oriented documents which played a clear role in institutional identity construction, the question became one of how to define and narrow the focus. This decision balanced theoretical and practical concerns such as the inclusion of single service doctrine, restricted material, and capacity for analysis. The initial approach was to identify all the doctrine documents which fell into one of two criteria: (1) Situated in a key position in the doctrine hierarchy and/or 2) having direct relevance to population-centred counterinsurgency. The resulting list of doctrine is provided in the hierarchical diagram at Figure 4, which includes the additional doctrine *Understanding* (2010), which was introduced later.

Doctrines covering peacekeeping or peace support operations were not included. The two doctrines which cover peacekeeping are *Joint Warfare Publication 3-50 The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations* (2004) and the interim update *Joint Doctrine Note 5/11 Peacekeeping: an evolving role for military forces* (2011). There are similarities in practice between these and counterinsurgency operations, including undertaking a range of non-combat activities in insecure environments which are discussed in the previous chapter. However there are key distinctions in the two environments, particularly in how they are framed and understood. Throughout the engagement with the forces, these doctrines weren't mentioned to me directly as relevant to practice in Iraq and Afghanistan. The distinction between the two is also stressed at the outset of the most recent joint doctrine note on peacekeeping (JDN 5/11 Peacekeeping: an evolving role for military forces 2011e: 1-1).

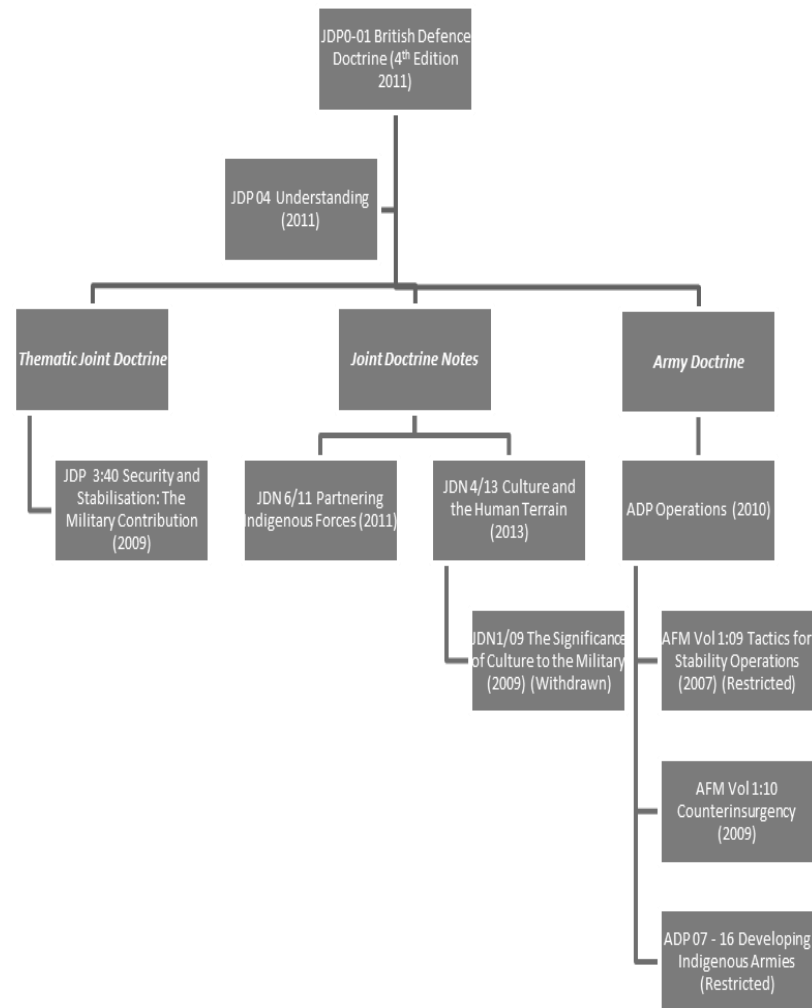


Figure 4. Hierarchical Diagram of Doctrine Shortlist

I made an initial reading of each of the doctrine in this list: noting key points, themes and references. It was during this reading that the doctrine *Understanding* was added to the list, as it was referenced by most of the other doctrines. After this initial reading, it became evident that the substantial length of the documents and complexity of content would require further narrowing in order to offer a detailed analysis.

During this initial reading I noted a difference in tone between the Joint Doctrines and Army Doctrines. This is supported by literature which discusses the different identity constructions between the services, which often position themselves in relation to the other services or specialisms (Barrett 1996, Higate 2003). I did not have access equally to doctrine across the three services, with better access to Army doctrine (which also explicitly deals with Counterinsurgency environment). During fieldwork I interacted with Royal Navy and Army personnel in Joint Service environments. To keep the focus of the thesis on the British Armed Forces as a whole institution I decided to exclude the single service Army doctrine. The particular development of joint doctrine publications is part of

what is described as 'jointery' in defence circles an increasing integration of the services, and an increasing feature of contemporary Armed Forces (Taylor 2003). A focus on joint doctrine enables analysis of the overarching institutional identity of the Armed Forces, and relationship to civilian others. Exploring the complex interactions and rivalries between the services, would distract from this goal. This also navigated another practical concern by removing from the list the two restricted documents (*AFM Vol1:09 Tactics for Stability Operations* 2007 and *ADP 07 - 16 Developing Indigenous Armies* 2007).

The research question seeks to capture how the British Armed Forces construct identity in relation to the practices of population-centred counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Two aspects of population-centred counterinsurgency emerged from my fieldwork with the British military, also featuring prominently in the wider media coverage of the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The first is the 'cultural turn' or the focus on developing military expertise in the cultures of Iraq and Afghanistan. The second related area was how to work with and develop the Afghan and Iraqi security services. The latter became important both for claims of legitimacy (at home and in Afghanistan and Iraq) and increasingly as part of a viable exit strategy. The relevance of these areas was confirmed by the development of specific joint doctrine; both *Culture and the Human Terrain* and *Partnering Indigenous Forces* are analysed as part of the thesis.

Alongside both increasing cultural capacity and partnering, it was also very apparent during my engagement with the Armed Forces that there was deep interest in how best to *think* about the conflicts. The influence of General Petraeus and the ideal of the 'soldier-scholar' were evident (explored in Chapter Seven). This influence can be seen in the intense interest in academia, and studies of counterinsurgency, culture and language – an interest which facilitated my own access to military sites. In the initial reading of the doctrine shortlisted the term 'understanding' was very noticeable, and the doctrine *Understanding* showed the institution grappling with this idea of new thinking for contemporary conflict. Including this doctrine was a means to explore this dynamic.

These three doctrine *Culture and the Human Terrain* and *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding* each engaged with a single aspect emerging alongside the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. At this stage I decided not to focus on *Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution* (2009). This was a challenging decision, as the doctrine is the nearest British equivalent to the prominent US Counterinsurgency Field Manual (US Dept. of the Army 2006). However it covers the broad context of Stabilisation, focussing on nation-building, governance and counterinsurgency. This broader approach and focus on the principles behind counter-insurgency, rather than specific practice, fuelled the decision not to analyse it in the same way as the other three doctrine. It was however closely read again as part of the analysis, and used to provide the context to the previous three.

Finally, *British Defence Doctrine* is analysed in the thesis. This doctrine is situated at the apex of the doctrine hierarchy and is the capstone doctrine; all other doctrines are subordinate to it. *British Defence Doctrine* lays out the philosophy of the British Armed Forces and sets the tone for the forces. As the preface states:

All officers and other interested members of the armed forces, regular and reserve, should read it. Initial training should introduce it and all stages of subsequent training and education should re-visit it to establish, and then extend, our understanding and competence. (MoD 2011b:iii)

As this quote suggests, *British Defence Doctrine* is widely distributed and has significant reach across the forces. It is included then not because of its specific relationship to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, although it has been updated during this period. Rather, it was subject to the same analysis in order to offer a context, and point of comparison to the other doctrines. The three doctrines *Culture and the Human Terrain*, *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding* then are the main focus of the thesis. This is summarised at Table 1. The following section looks at the framework developed to analyse these doctrines.

Table 2: Selected Doctrine

Ref	Doctrine	Date
JDP0-01	British Defence Doctrine	2011
JDP 04	Understanding	2010
JDN4/13	Culture and The Human Terrain	2013
JDN6-11	Partnering Indigenous Forces	2011

3.3 ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

This section describes the methodological approach to the texts, detailing the poststructuralist approach to identity and discourse and its practical application to the texts. This strategy was developed after the first reading of the doctrine, and in response to the texts. It builds from Chapter Two, which developed an understanding of gendered identity as fluid, relational and contingent rather than emergent from a pre-existing sexed body. This theoretical approach underpins the poststructuralist discourse analysis. A discursive approach is particularly apt in responding to the research questions posed, as Howarth explains:

Discourse Theorists are concerned with how, under what conditions, and for what reasons, discourses are constructed, contested and change. They seek, therefore, to describe, understand and explain particular historical

events and processes, rather than establish empirical generalizations or test universal hypotheses, and their concepts and logics are designed for this purpose. (Howarth, 2000:131)

The concern of this project is the identity of the British armed forces, and how it is (re)constructed and contested in light of the Iraq and Afghan wars. The intent is not to produce a causal analysis or test a hypothesis, but rather look at the dynamics of the relationship between military identity and practice. This methodological approach draws heavily from Hansen's (2006) work, and its adaption by Duncanson (2007, 2009, 2013:68-70) for work on military identity. Hansen (2006) carefully considers how a poststructuralist approach can be expressed methodologically, and its relevance to a foreign policy research agenda. Here, following Duncanson (2007, 2009, 2013) Hansen's approach is adapted to fit focus of my research, in particular the focus on the military institution, rather than the state more broadly, and the particularities of military doctrine discussed above.

SELVES AND OTHERS, LINKAGES AND DIFFERENTIATION, THE INSIDE AND OUT

Identity is established through language, where objects, people, ideas are made meaningful (Hansen 2006:23). It is not simply enough to identify explicit expressions of positive identity and difference – of Self and Other. Certainly, in the doctrine there are instances of simple articulation of who the British Armed Forces are, and who they are differentiated from: such as military not civilian or Western and not 'indigenous'. However, it is clear that many of the linkages and differentiations are

implicit rather than explicitly stated, and are concealed by established systems of meaning (Hansen 2006:44). For example, much of the identity construction within the doctrine relies on pre-existing understandings of the military, which draw on understandings of war and masculinity which are not overtly stated. Further, focusing only on binary distinctions – between Self and Other loses the complexity of relationships which inform identity construction.

This process of identity construction can be seen as occurring through a complex process of linking and differentiation to establish meanings (Hansen 2006). Hansen (2006) uses the example of 19th century discourses of gender to illustrate. Her diagram depicting this is reproduced at figure 2. It shows the 'positive' linking together of terms to give meaning to the idea of 'woman' and

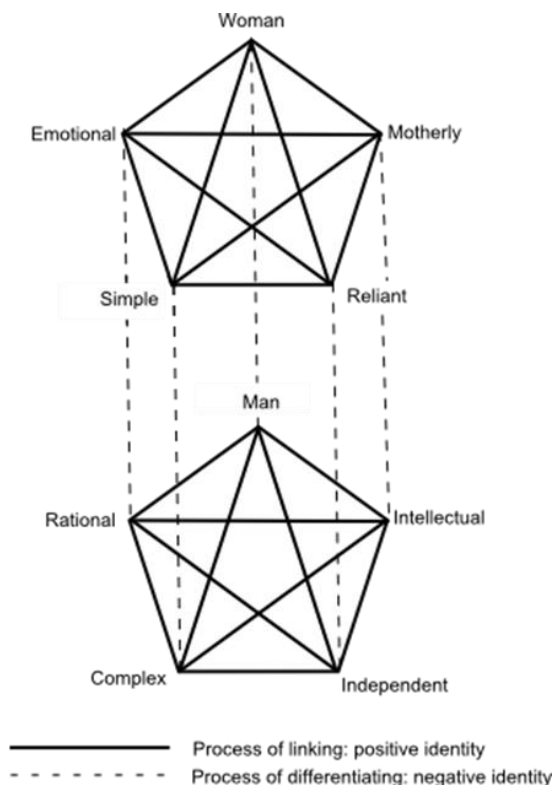


Figure 5. Linking and Differentiation
(reproduced from Hansen 2006:20)

conversely their differentiation from others and ‘men’. As detailed in chapter two multiple studies of Armed Forces suggested a particular configuration of a ‘combat soldier’ linking together ideas of physical fitness, bravery, aggression, emotional restraint and masculinity. Similarly these were differentiated from ‘Others’; women, homosexual men, civilians, or men in non-combat roles, which were linked to ideas of softness, weakness, emotionality, and femininity. Both the linking of particular traits, and their differentiation from others, simultaneously construct the particular ideal of the ‘combat soldier’. However, it was also apparent that there were signs of changes and contestation, as shown by Duncanson (2009) in the emergence of a discourse of peace-keeping masculinity. Whilst looking for processes of linking and differentiation highlights the structure of identity within language, it also shows the potential for contestation and change. An alternative discourse might value something constructed as negative, or the links between positive signs may become unstable (Hansen 2006:21). Duncanson (2009) traces how for some soldiers engaged in peacekeeping, skills previously devalued and linked to femininity, were at times being recoded as important, difficult and linked to masculinity. Crucially this potential for contestation and instability, also offers a context for wider change (Duncanson 2009:77). The doctrines then are analysed for what linkages and differentiations are particularly stable within and across the doctrine, and where instability, and competing discourses emerge. As Hansen argues:

the construction of identity should therefore be situated inside a careful investigation of which signs are articulated by a particular discourse or text, how they are coupled to achieve discursive stability, where instabilities and slips between these constructions might occur, and how competing discourses construct the same sign to different effects. (Hansen 2006:42)

Identities therefore take on meanings within the text not only through stark lines of difference, and an analytical approach should not draw on a simplistic notion of a radical other but rather “allow the concept of identity to assume degrees of Otherness” (Hansen 2006 p.37). In military constructions of enemy combatants in the field, distinctions were drawn within the doctrine between hardened foreign fighters and locals acting as hired guns (MoD 2010f:3-8). Both were constructed as ‘others’, but the former was an ‘irreconcilable target’ and the other could be potentially won back, or at least could be understood.

Relatedly, the gendered framework of identity developed in Chapter Two showed masculinities defined not only in opposition to a feminised Others, but in relation to other masculine identities and inextricable from intersecting structures of power. Central to the analysis here is the way in which masculinity operates through and with the construction of racialized lines of difference, through class, and ideas of sexuality and ability. Using a framework of linking and differentiation attentive to ‘degrees of Otherness’ enables a nuanced reading of identity construction, which can consider multiple intersecting discourses.

SPACE, ETHICS, AND TIME

In order to investigate the positioning of the Self and Other, in relation to each other there are three particular forms of linkage used – spatial, temporal and ethical (Hansen 2006:46). Hansen argues “at the grandest philosophical scale, space, time, and responsibility are the big concepts through which political communities – their boundaries, internal constitution and relationship with the outside world - are thought and argued” (Hansen 2006:46). These are particularly relevant to the intersectional approach of the project. In relation to the British Armed Forces, the differential position of Self and Other along these lines is often rooted in hierarchical ideas of national, and racial difference. A rigorous study of discursive identity construction requires a close attention to these three areas in order to explore these dynamics.

Identities are always spatially situated; their relational nature means that some borders are marked, delineating a special relationship. Whilst this can be simply understood as marked nation-states, or more complex regional identities, spatiality is also invoked in abstract political spaces – such as the public or private sphere (Hansen 2006:47). These spatial constructions are often intersected with temporal ones. Military discussion of ‘primitive tribal areas’ in Afghanistan for example blends territory and development. Identities are constructed in relation to ideas of time, which often rest on notions of linearity and progress, often associated with liberal understandings of a directional human development. This means that the Self and Other can be positioned at different stages of time in relation to one another. The British Armed Forces for example, invoke notions of tradition and a long history, but simultaneously stress their modern and developed nature, contrasted with ‘undeveloped’ Others. The final aspect here is ethics, where identities are constructed through ideas of morality and ‘responsibility’ (Hansen 2006). Again this has strong relevance for an institution embedded in an understanding of ‘just war’ and engaged with drawing distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate forms of combat and, crucially, combatants.

These three dimensions add a complexity to the analysis which enables a close examination of the different discourses of identity present within the doctrine, and the framing being deployed to make sense of the practices and actors engaged in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I analysed the texts for particular constructions that drew on spatial, temporal and ethical frames. In particular ideas of ‘here’ and ‘there’, development and progress, tradition and modernity, legitimacy and right were noted during the second reading alongside the framework developed to capture practice.

CAPTURING PRACTICE & INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY: THREE QUESTIONS

The thesis seeks to capture the particular relationship of the non-combat practices implicated in population-centred Counterinsurgency to identity construction. Identifying constructions of self and other through linkages and differentiations and their particular interplay along spatial, ethical and temporal lines catches the complexity and nuance of identity in the doctrines. However it became apparent that a further framework was needed to hone in on the role of practice. Through engaging with the text in a second reading it became clear that there was an interplay between practice, and a

strong narrative of mission, purpose or function. The texts not only described how things were or should be done, but also what the end goal, or purpose of that activity was. It was in relation to these elements that the identity of the British Armed Forces was being articulated. This interrelationship of ‘what we do’ and ‘how we do it’ formed the story of ‘who we are’. I reformulated this into questions to take back to the texts and structure the analysis. This is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6: The three questions

Further, the answers to these seemingly straightforward questions “What do we do? How do we do it? Who are we?”, within the doctrine texts, form a sense-making process within the doctrine, where the stated identity, practices and functions are reconciled with each other. When the answers correspond logically, the resulting formulation is clear and simple: “We are the armed forces, because we fight wars, through the deploying force, because we are the armed forces“. This thesis asks how the identity of the Armed Forces is constructed in relation to a Counterinsurgency approach which shifts the

focus from combat. As the operational context shifts, this simplified narrative is destabilised. The linkages between warfighting and military identity are disrupted and a new formulation or a new sense must be found. The relationship between these questions is not linear, but mutually reinforcing as each element is used to explain or justify the other two. Using this framework enables a systematic approach to the texts for the more detailed third reading, and provides an analytical focus which centres the relationship of military practice and identity.

The thesis explores the identity of the Armed Forces at an organisational level, rather than that of individuals. As such it draws on an idea of the military as an institution – characterised by shared conventions, rules and norms (Lowndes & Roberts 2013:3-5). Whilst not adopting an expressly institutionalist approach, the insights of both discursive and feminist new institutionalism inform the project (for discussion see MacKay, Kenney & Chappell 2010). The focus on doctrine as documents which balance both ‘enduring principles’ and a ‘continual refinement’ of concepts, is in part reflecting an interest in the interactive process of discursive identity construction. The context of the military and doctrine are institutional in that they are ‘simultaneously constraining structures and enabling constructs of meaning and enabling constructs of meaning’ (Schmidt, 2010:4). To examine the discourses of identity in the Armed Forces is also to consider their interaction with, and co-constitution of, institutional structures (Kulawick 2009). The role of gender is significant here as the “gender relations and norms of masculinity and femininity provide important mechanisms by which particular arrangements and power asymmetries are naturalized and institutionalized, or resisted and

discarded” (Mackay, 2009 cited in MacKay, Kenney & Chappell 2010). This is particularly relevant in approaches to military institutions, where the norms of masculinity have been naturalised and have considerable impact on the distribution of power (explored in Chapter 2). Rather than a static set of documents, doctrine is best understood as part of an institutional phenomenon, an ongoing communicative process which is both making visible and influencing practices and understandings within the military institution. The analysis of the doctrine is a means to examine the institutional context of the military and the persistent gendered norms and practices.

INTERTEXTUALITY

The field of British doctrine is a closely knit set of texts. As well as drawing on and referencing each other they also draw on a wider defence community, and an associated body of references and texts. This section briefly outlines some of the parameters of that inter text. The intertextuality of the doctrine is an important part of the identity construction of the military, drawing on established frames of reference, which also form means of authorisation to the text.

The documents themselves are structured in relation to one another, and explicitly reference one another. In addition there are also less obvious links established through the language, the use of shared terminology and definitions as well as the textual structure and style. The writing conventions for British Doctrine have a distinct ‘house style’, which is laid out in a guide to producing doctrine. Although not always consistently followed in detail, it provides a general recognisable formula for the doctrine (DCDC, 2013:3-1 to 3-11 see also DA, 2010)

The British Armed Forces have developed formal written doctrine, but also have a long tradition of doctrine based on military texts and experience, with some particular works being taught and widely endorsed to comprise a body of semi-formal doctrine. This is an ongoing phenomenon, with both classic and new works being regularly cited in doctrine, and appearing on the reading lists on command courses. These texts are often authored by retired officers, and there is a military-academic community where serving, and retired personnel, analysts and academics, publish, and attend conferences and events together. Doctrine also draws on historical and contemporary case studies, which are sometimes drawn from this community, and often appear directly in doctrine through acknowledgements, direct citations, quotes and ‘vignettes’.

One common stylistic feature of doctrine is the convention of heading chapters or sections with an attributed quote. These often drawn classic works of military history, politics and strategy; Clausewitz, Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, and TE Lawrence are common. They also quote more contemporary military figures such as Rupert Smith, Frank Kitson, David Petraeus, and David Kilcullen. Occasionally they cite political figures, such as British prime ministers or ministers of defence. Contemporary doctrine also directly references US doctrine, such as the prominent US FM3-24 Counter Insurgency. Joint Doctrine Notes, on the whole, tend to have more references than full Publications, due to their less authoritative position and as part of their experimental role. The

quotations situate doctrine within a broader discursive framing which is part of construction of identity, as will be apparent in the analysis in Part II.

There is also an element of historic legacy. Contemporary doctrine is often based in revisions of older doctrine, either directly in new ‘editions’, refining or updating the previous editions, or in more substantively renamed or reworked versions. The different editions of the same pieces of doctrine show a refining and responsive process: what remains stable and what is subject to influence. Further, certain terminology or understandings are in different stages of use, and are actively in transition across the currently active array of doctrine. This highlights the process of evolving-thought and practice in use. In some cases changing terminology is just an indication of an incomplete process of standardisation with an end point – e.g. the terminology “Joint Warfare Publication (JWP)” is being phased out, in a graduated renaming process in favour of Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP). As the process is incomplete, there is an inconsistency in naming and referencing across the doctrine. Other shifts in terminology perhaps show more profound shifts in ways of thinking, or approaching a particular idea or set of practices. The introduction of a definition of ‘Partnering’ (explored in Chapter 5) is a move to establish a new general concept. It will take time to consolidate it, and it is not yet used consistently across the full body of doctrine. Each of the doctrines studied are put into context during the analysis, with their connections to each other, other doctrine and wider texts included as part of the analysis

It is important here to note that as a researcher. I do not have a military background, and engaged with these texts as an outsider. It took a substantial period of time to adjust to the language, terminology, style and intertext of the British Armed Forces. During my initial engagement, the need to become familiar with a particular range of texts was very clear to me. I quickly started amassing a list of resources; from the reading lists of the staff command courses at Shrivenham, and suggestions from military contacts. These ranged from ‘classics’ of strategic and war studies literature, to popular culture (e.g. the film ‘Seven Samurai’ which was suggested as a fine example of counterinsurgency). This enabled me to develop a ‘knowledge of a key political vocabulary and its conceptual history’, which enabled me to develop a more ‘precise contextualized constitution of meaning.’ (Hansen 2006:84).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the research focus on British Armed Forces doctrine. It argued that doctrine offers an informative site in which to study identity construction in a way that draws on the institutional understandings of practice. Doctrine is a body of living documents, which both draw on and establish a set of concepts, norms, procedures and rules and which also offer a site in which they are contested, reformed and developed. Due to the dissemination of doctrine, and its role in teaching and training establishments, the documents have reach beyond their immediate readership, and form part of a wider military discourse.

The methodological approach adopted in the thesis emerged from a complex journey where the focus of the project evolved and developed in relation to the challenging realities of empirical research. The poststructuralist understandings of identity and masculinity underpinned the development of a multifaceted analytical approach. The construction of identity through linkages and differentiation, allows for a nuanced analysis of how the Self and Other are constructed. Alongside this a close attention to spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions allow recognition of ‘degrees of Otherness’. This brings the intersection of different aspects of identity construction to the forefront of the analysis. In addition the research focus on the non-combat practices of counterinsurgency resulted in the development of a framework of analytical questions to use to interrogate the texts. Asking “Who we are”, “What we do”, and “How we do it”, clarifies the interaction between practice and identity, which is at the core of the thesis.

PART II - THE DOCTRINE

... things that have been regarded as supporting or enabling functions such as deep cultural understanding (which includes fluency in languages), Human Intelligence or Civil-Military Cooperation will, in this environment, be battle-defining. (MoD 2010b:16 *Future Character of Conflict* referring to a likely future asymmetric / hybrid conflict environment)

The central question of this thesis is how military identity is constructed in relation to the shifts in practice associated with counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Or to rephrase in relation to the quote above, what happens to military identity when it isn't combat that is understood to be 'battle-defining'? In the framing of counterinsurgency operations, even the idea of a battlefield shifts from physical terrain, to the 'hearts and minds' of unfamiliar populations, which must be mapped and understood. The military advantage is to be gained not necessarily in superior numbers, advanced technology or the right balance of fires and manoeuvre, but rather in the military capacity to 'learn and adapt', to field capable linguists, to mentor cross-culturally or to 'engage' local women.

This part of the thesis turns to the analysis of specific doctrine: *British Defence Doctrine* (2011), *Culture and the Human Terrain* (2013), *Partnering Indigenous Forces* (2011) and *Understanding* (2010). The latter three documents cover practices which could be understood as previously 'enabling' or 'support functions' but which became more prominent in the recent campaigns. The four documents span 2010-2013 in publication dates and were released after the US 'Surge' in Iraq and towards the end of the official conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. They show the consolidation of the 'lessons learnt' from the earlier phases of the operations into the institutional structures of the British Armed Forces. This introduction will first briefly outline population-centred counterinsurgency and an associated military 'cultural turn' which forms the context in which the doctrine sit, showing the expanding remit of military activity. It will then outline the structure of the following chapters.

As has been discussed previously, the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan have brought counterinsurgency into a startling ascendancy, and in particular an approach to counterinsurgency which shifted focus from the 'kill-or-capture' of enemy fighters to an approach centring on the civilian populations of Iraq and Afghanistan and framing the conflict as one of winning 'hearts and minds'. The advocates of this approach are a mixture of political and military actors who found their figure head in US General David Petraeus. They drew selectively on the experience of the European imperial powers struggling to maintain control in the face of anti-colonial nationalist uprisings and recent field experience in the peacekeeping operations of the post-cold war era. The resulting approach was one that idealised minimal force, political primacy, and intelligence-led operations but which still crucially included combat operations although this is selectively downplayed (at times).

Alongside the growing consensus that a new strategy was needed in Iraq and as this population-centred counterinsurgency approach was gaining favour, there was also a growing fascination in the coalition military defence circles with ‘culture’. This preoccupation came to such prominence in the military-defence establishment that it has been labelled a military ‘cultural turn’. Rather than a coherent discourse, singly located, this cultural took on a number of different guises, and across institutional, physical, knowledge and administrative sites. It is perhaps best understood as “a heterogeneous assemblage of discourses and objects, practices and powers distributed across different but networked sites: a military dispositive” (Gregory 2008:12).

The initial fascination with culture emerged early in the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, where simplistic accounts of ‘Arab’, ‘Muslim’ or even ‘Eastern’ ways of war were deployed to explain the character of the violent resistance to military occupation (Porter 2009:57 -61). However, as the offensive/kinetic and technologically oriented approach to fighting the insurgency lost favour and population-centred counterinsurgency gained institutional support, the idea of improved cultural capacity became linked to the latter. The shift to population-centred counterinsurgency widened the ‘cultural turn’ from a need to understand not just ‘the enemy’, to understand the whole population, which became reframed as the human terrain on which the insurgency was to be fought. Improved understanding of social, political, religious and economic aspects of a population became coded as ‘cultural’, neatly sidestepping a closer investigation of cause and effect. Simultaneously, critique of a lack of cultural skill and the possibility of improvement was also used to support the idea of population-centred counterinsurgency. Better ‘cultural capacity’ was possible and improved understanding of the population also promised a better, smarter and possibly even more humanitarian war (Sewell 2007; Cohen 2010:75; Jager 2007:2; Porter 2009: 57).

Much of the discourse of population-centred counterinsurgency and the culture turn, originates from and is dominated by the US Armed Forces. This is reflected in both their lead in the campaigns, committing the majority of forces and filling the majority of senior command posts. As the world’s largest, best funded military power US defence priorities, thought and trends have impact on their coalition partners, allies particularly through NATO, and close cooperation and exchange between the five major Anglophone Armed Forces (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the UK). The US and UK have particularly close military ties and the UK’s role as a major contributor to the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan furthered the exchange of ideas and influence. Through the ‘special relationship’ US military trends have considerable impact on the British Armed Forces, which respond not just to the pragmatic demands on the ground, but also to the global, and US dominated military trends.

This Part II of the thesis analyses doctrine which emerged as part of the British military response to population-centred counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan and the ‘cultural turn’. The documents *Culture and the Human Terrain*, *Partnering Indigenous Forces*, and *Understanding* are analysed in Chapters Five to Seven. They are newly authored, covering particular practices which can be

understood as the previously ‘enabling’ or ‘support functions’ which came to prominence with the Counterinsurgency turn. *British Defence Doctrine*, analysed in Chapter Four, has a longer institutional history as the most authoritative iteration of British military doctrine and is analysed to provide a context for the following three, serving as an insight into the overarching and dominant forms of institutional identity.

Each of the four chapters analyses a single document in turn, and follows a similar structure. First, they introduce the particular aspect of operational environment the document addresses and its intertextual links, then provide a description of the document on which the subsequent analysis is based. The ‘three questions’ approach developed in Chapter three is used as a framework for the analysis of the documents, looking in turn at the articulation of ‘what do we do?’ ‘how do we do it?’ and ‘who are we?’. In structuring the analysis in this way the interlinking and mutually constructing aspects of narrative and practice can be systematically explored.

In each of these chapters, the attention is on the construction of a military institutional identity and the work that gender does in identity construction. In Chapters Five to Seven the non-combat linked practices described *Culture and the Human Terrain* (2013), *Partnering Indigenous Forces* (2011) and *Understanding* (2010) are newly being incorporated as part of ‘battle defining’ military work, and as part of counterinsurgency warfare. These chapters trace how they are they made sense of in the texts, and in relation to wider discourses of military identity, masculinity and *British Defence Doctrine* (2011).

CHAPTER 4. BRITISH DEFENCE DOCTRINE

Doctrine is about ways of thinking about operations today and in the immediate future, BDD [British Defence Doctrine] is a clear statement of current thinking. (Major General Tony Milton, 2001:41)

The Armed Forces are at the core of our nation's security. They make a vital and unique contribution. Above all, they give us the means to threaten or use force when other levers of power are unable to protect our vital interests. (SDSR cited in BDD 4th Edition MoD 2011b:1)

INTRODUCTION

The document *British Defence Doctrine* has been introduced previously in Chapter Three. It occupies a unique position in the British Armed Forces as the publication with highest authority in the doctrine hierarchy. All other doctrine, whether joint, single service or allied doctrine, are subordinate to it. This chapter offers an analysis of *British Defence Doctrine* using the three questions framework introduced Chapter Three.

While the following three chapters speak to new doctrine that have been developed and written in the latter-period of the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan, *British Defence Doctrine* was first issued in 1996. Relatedly, whilst the following three chapters each speak to an element of practice which gained particular weight through those counter-insurgency wars, *British Defence Doctrine* speaks to the broader defence context. Due to its institutional weight, the documents analysed in the three subsequent chapters all reference *British Defence Doctrine* and draw authority from being situated in relation to it. Through the analysis of *British Defence Doctrine* the aim in this chapter is to use *British Defence Doctrine* to provide a context for the subsequent three chapters. It aims to draw out the construction of particular dominant discourses of institutional identity within which the other documents relate to and are in part situated within.

The chapter proceeds with a brief history of the document, before turning to the analysis of the doctrine. It uses the three questions introduced in Chapter Three – What do we do? How do we do it? And who are we? – which together form a stable narrative of identity. Here, this chapter asks what purpose is set for the British Armed forces in defence before questioning how this is to be achieved. Finally it looks at who the Armed forces are set out as being. Alongside these questions, close attention is paid to the deployment of temporal, spatial and ethical constructions which play a key role in the British Armed forces' identity. The chapter concludes drawing these elements together and foregrounding the following three chapters.

4.1 BRITISH DEFENCE DOCTRINE

There have been three revisions of *British Defence Doctrine* since the first publication in 1996 with each edition replacing its predecessor. The most recent 4th Edition is very similar to the 3rd Edition

with the same overall structure maintained from each. The majority of the content is also the same with minor changes in terminology, a crude indicator of this being a computer aided comparison which shows a 71% match word for word. There are far clearer differences between these latter two documents and their forerunners the original and 2nd Edition, both of which have different structures. The publication dates, and content structure is provided in Table 3 for comparison.

Table 3. Showing a comparison of different editions of British Defence Doctrine.

Edition	Date Released	Pages	Structure
4 th Edition	Nov 2011	99 (A4 PDF Version)	PART 1 - DEFENCE CONTEXT Chapter 1 Security and Defence Chapter 2 War and Warfare PART 2 - MILITARY DOCTRINE Chapter 3 Employment of UK Armed Forces Annex 3A –When Armed Forces Might Be Used Chapter 4 Fighting Power Chapter 5 The British Way of War Annex 5A – Attributes of British Military Culture
3 rd Edition	Aug 2008	79 (A4 PDF Version)	PART 1 – DEFENCE CONTEXT Chapter 1 Security and Defence Chapter 2 War and Warfare PART 2 – MILITARY DOCTRINE Chapter 3 Employment of British Armed Forces Annex 3A – When Armed Forces Might be Used Chapter 4 Fighting Power Chapter 5 The British Way of War Annex 5A – Attributes of British Military Culture
2 nd Edition	Oct 2001	63 (A4 PDF Version)	PART I – INTRODUCTION Chapter 1 Introducing Military Doctrine Chapter 2 The Strategic Context PART II – THE BRITISH APPROACH TO MILITARY OPERATIONS Chapter 3 The Essential Elements of British Doctrine Chapter 4 Fighting power Chapter 5 Warfare and the Utility of Fighting Power Chapter 6. The Broader Utility of Fighting Power Chapter 7 The Philosophy of Command
Original	1996	190 (A5 Print version)	Chapter One: Introduction Chapter Two: War and Armed Conflict Chapter Three: Security and Defence Chapter Four: Strategic Considerations Chapter Five: United Kingdom Security and Defence Chapter Six: British Military Capability Chapter Seven: Crisis Management Annex A: Principles of War Annex B: Conflict and Legality Annex C: Collective Security and Defence Annex D: Command and Control Arrangements

The following chapter will focus primarily on the 4th Edition as the most current⁸, although this was read alongside the 3rd Edition, which was also active during the time period considered and is the version cited by one of the three doctrines analysed in the following chapters. Differences between the two were highlighted as they were read, and significant changes are referred to in the subsequent analysis. The remainder of this section provides a description of the document, on which the subsequent analysis then builds.

The 4th Edition of *British Defence Doctrine* is 99 A4 pages, and divided into two parts. Chapters one and two comprise the first part, and chapters three to five the second part (see table above for structure). The document begins with a foreword written by the Chief of Defence Staff⁹ which sets out what and who the doctrine is for, followed by a preface with more matter of fact context for the document, situating it amongst wider defence policy documents, and introducing the two part structure.

The first part of the document considers the ‘defence context’ and looks at wider patterns in defence and security, and contemporary warfare. It is introduced with a full page image of the Union Jack, and a quote from British Prime Minister David Cameron taken from The National Security Strategy 2010. It states “In a world of change, the first duty of the Government remains: the security of our country”. In the 4th Edition of BDD (2011) each chapter is introduced by a quote, a change from the 3rd Edition (2008). For chapter 1 entitled ‘Security and Defence’ the opening quote is taken from the Strategic Defence and Security Review, used to head the introduction to this chapter above.

This first chapter introduces a number of defence concepts. It covers human security, UK and collective security, defines the national interest and the difference between policy and strategy. It also lays out three instruments of national power as: diplomatic, economic and military and underpinned by ‘information’. Power is also defined and categorised into hard and soft. The chapter goes on to cover crisis management, and the ‘integrated approach’¹⁰. The penultimate section looks at the ‘Utility of Force’ with a particular focus on coercion (the 3rd Edition placed more emphasis on deterrence). The chapter concludes with consideration of legitimacy and force. Chapter 1 has an Annex ‘International Collaboration’ which briefly describes the UN, NATO, the EU and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

⁸ A 5th Edition showing a substantial revision has just been released in Nov. 2014 too late to be included in this analysis.

⁹ The professional head of the British Armed Forces.

¹⁰ Renaming the former ‘comprehensive approach’ used in the 3rd Edition of BDD (2008) and other documents

The second chapter entitled “Wars and Warfare” opens with the often paraphrased quote from Clausewitz: ‘It is clear that war is not a mere act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political activity by other means’. The chapter begins with a description of war as an ‘instrument of policy’ and goes on to suggest blurred lines between war and peace, reflecting on the potential for hybrid elements to future operations.

The chapter goes on to define potential causes for war, before defining war and its ‘enduring’ features. The following section then lists the ‘principles of war’ namely: Selection and Maintenance of Aim, Maintenance of Morale, Offensive Action, Security, Surprise, Concentration of Force, Economy of Effort, Flexibility, Co-operation and Sustainability. Following this the ‘Levels of Warfare’ are detailed as strategic, operational and tactical (see Chapter 3:46). A section on ‘The Character of Warfare’ suggests a spectrum of conflict from war to peace and complexity in describing armed conflict in absolutes. The chapter then refers to specific contexts; this initially covers the threat of conventional warfare, Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) warfare, ‘unconventional weapons’, and a substantial paragraph details threat from instability and irregular threats from ‘terrorists, criminals, insurgents and other disruptive elements’ (2-12). The next paragraph cites retired General Sir Rupert Smith’s *Utility of Force* (2006) to highlight operations where ‘the people in the streets and houses and fields – all the people everywhere- are the battlefield’ (2-12). The section then looks at the operating environment and the dimensions of conflict: maritime, land, air, space, information, electro-magnetic and time, the principles of joint operations, the importance of influence, counter-information and an ‘information strategy’.

The second part of *British Defence Doctrine* is referred to as ‘Military doctrine’ and is headed by a full page photo of the three heads of services reading in a library setting. This image is accompanied by a quote from renowned Naval historian Sir Julian Corbett stating that doctrine is ‘the soul of warfare’. The second part, comprising three chapters, narrows the focus to look at the use of armed force, and supposed British ways of generating and wielding it.

Chapter 3 looks at the ‘Employment of UK Armed Forces’ opening with a quote from the National Security Strategy ‘In an age of uncertainty, we need to be able to act quickly and effectively to address new and evolving threats to our security’ (3-1). The chapter is divided into sections covering: Conflict prevention, Conflict intervention, Combat and Major Combat Operations. This chapter is updated from the 3rd Edition where sections are titled Activities Before Conflict, Activities After Conflict, Combat and Major Warfighting. The latter two sections remain largely the same, although reference to ‘Total War’ present in the 3rd Edition are removed in the 4th. The first two renamed sections show more revisions, with additional sections on conflict prevention through military ‘soft power’ and an additional section on potential for ‘discharging the responsibilities of an occupying power’ in the 4th 2011 version (3-3). The chapter has an annex listing the scenarios under which armed force might be used which has little variation between the two versions.

Chapter 4 looks at ‘Fighting Power’ and is headed by a quote from Israeli military historian Martin Van Creveld that ‘Where fighting spirit is lacking everything else is a waste of time’ (4-1). Fighting power is described as having three components – the conceptual component (the thought process), the moral component (the ability to get people to fight), and the physical component (the means to fight). After a section on the context of fighting power, the three conceptual components are dealt with in turn. The final two sections in chapter four cover the generation, and orchestration of fighting power.

Chapter 5 details ‘The British Way of War’ and is headed with a quote from Shakespeare: ‘In peace nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility, but when the blast of war blows in our ears, then imitate the action of the tiger, stiffen the sinews, disguise fair nature with hard favour’d rage...’. (Shakespeare, cited at 5-1)

The chapter begins with sections on command and campaigning which list the ideals of the British ‘way’, and a short section on the manoeuvrist approach¹¹. The Warfighting Ethos is described in the following section, followed by the Armed Forces Covenant. The chapter’s final section looks at “British Armed Forces into the Future”. This also forms the conclusion of the document. It details the relationship of the Armed forces to wider British society and the overall aims of the armed forces. Finally the need for adaptivity and flexibility, and the continuing revision of doctrine is stressed. Chapter 5 has an Annex “Attributes of British Military Culture” which provides a list of what are described as ‘distinctive attributes’ each of which are briefly described and illustrated by an accompanying quote(s) from historians, politicians or military leaders. The attributes are: Courage, Offensive Spirit, Loyalty, Comradeship, Determination, Patriotism, Duty, Sacrifice, Initiative, Humanity, Ingenuity, and Humour.

4.2 PURPOSE, PRACTICE, IDENTITY: THE THREE QUESTIONS

The following section uses the ‘three questions’ framework introduced in Chapter Three to analyse the document. It uses the questions “What do we do? How do we do it? And who are we?” to trace the multiple and interlinked narratives of purpose, practice and identity which are constructed in the doctrine publication. These questions serve to structure the analysis, and bring into focus the multiple sites of identity construction and the particular interplay between understandings of practice and identity. The analysis here is not intended to produce a linear account, but rather look at the relationships between these aspects and situating them in wider context of military identities.

WHAT DO WE DO?

British Defence Doctrine is intended to set out the broad purpose of the British Armed Forces as an institution, and to situate the Armed Forces within the wider structures of the nation. There are two

¹¹ This refers to “a particular philosophy of war based upon the principle of defeating the enemy by attacking such intangibles as cohesion and will to fight rather than focusing on destroying the enemy’s materiel.” (Jordan et al 2008:xii, see also Milton 2001:43)

clear themes which emerge from the document. The most prominent is that of providing national security and the protection or promotion of a broadly defined national interest. The second theme is one of humanitarianism, where the British Armed Forces play a moral role in the international community, through intervention or support of their allies. In addition to these two themes, the armed forces themselves are positioned as integral to forming the Nation itself.

National Security and the National Interest

In both parts one and two of the doctrine, the function of the Armed forces is consistently laid out as the defence of British national security and the support and promotion of British interests both at home and abroad. It is shown as a distinct wing of the state apparatus which operates under civilian control alongside other state instruments to protect the territory and interests of the British state. The quote below exemplifies this, citing the Cabinet publication *The National Security Strategy* (2010) it draws security, freedom and prosperity together as a broad understanding of ‘British Interests’:

The National Security Strategy describes the UK national interest as security, prosperity and freedom; interests that are interconnected and mutually supportive. Security and prosperity form a virtuous circle, because without security and the ability of UK citizens to live their lives freely, the foundations of prosperity would be undermined. While freedom for the UK to engage across the world brings opportunities, it also makes the country vulnerable to overseas events, including distant conflict. This means that the UK may need to act abroad, sometimes forcefully, to maintain the British way of life. (2011b:1-4, new section for the 4th Edition not in the 3rd Edition 2008)

The circular relationship drawn between ‘security, prosperity and freedom’ is mutually re-enforcing and ascribed to a ‘British way of life’, which must be maintained for UK citizens: it is labelled as virtuous. *British Defence Doctrine* links Britain’s interests to wider global interests, rather than a narrow idea of defence of British territorial integrity. Britain is described as a ‘prominent international player’ with economic dependence of international trade and overseas investment (2011b:1-3). These linkages and a later reference to substantial British migrant populations living abroad, as well as the immigrant populations in the British Isles are used to justify an expansive vision of British national interest (2011b:1-3). These interests are seen as a collective responsibility of the British government and state apparatus: “It is not, however, the role of the Armed Forces to define national interest; that is a political function.” (2011b:1-4). The military is presented as a non-politicised part of that state apparatus, and is seen as operating with other agencies and governmental bodies through the Integrated Approach¹² to managing defence and security interests. In *British Defence Doctrine* the defence and support of British interests is the main function, it is ‘what the

¹² Renamed from the previous ‘comprehensive’ approach in 3rd Edition 2008, the terminology is currently in transition across the body of doctrine.

British Armed Forces does' even when activities are described which do not directly reference national interest.

The annex to Chapter three lists the circumstances under which the UK armed forces may be employed. These include 5 scenarios: Protecting the Security of the UK, Protecting the Security of Dependent Territories, In Response to a United Nations Security Council Resolution, Treaty Obligations, and Promoting and Defending National Interests Worldwide (2011b: Annex 3A). It is important to note here that this includes two scenarios for actions of the Armed Forces which do not, necessarily, invoke national security: treaty obligations (e.g. through NATO) or a UNSCR mandating action, which will be looked at in the following section. However the remaining three stress the importance of national interest, even if only 'indirectly pertinent' as in this quote:

[I]t is likely that threats to international security would also represent a threat to national interests. In these circumstances, the Armed Forces may take part in operations as part of an alliance or coalition, but may have to act alone to protect or promote national interests. In certain situations, the interests at stake may be only indirectly pertinent to the national interest, in a narrow sense, but it may nonetheless be judged expedient to intervene on humanitarian, compassionate or moral grounds. (BDD 2011:3A-2)

Despite recognising humanitarian grounds for intervention, this is situated under the heading 'Promoting and Defending Interests Worldwide'. There are several mentions of humanitarian grounds for action, but they are usually partnered with or situated as subordinate to British national interests, explored in the following section.

Humanitarianism

Whilst the strongest message emerging from *British Defence Doctrine* is one of national interest and protection of the nation, there is another strand which invokes an ethical stance - a humanitarian story of 'what we do'. In the quote highlighted in the previous section it was noted that threats to international security were linked to British national security; it was also recognised that there are situations where this does not form a compelling case for military action alone but 'it may nonetheless be judged expedient to intervene on humanitarian, compassionate or moral grounds' (2011:3A-2). This humanitarian ideal is framed in the beginning of Chapter One where the text introduces the concept of 'Human Security' – which prioritises individual people's experience of (in) security rather than State's territorial security. It stresses the importance of human security citing the UN's 'Responsibility to Protect' agenda. These broad paragraphs are intended to give general framework of security rather than a solely military role, and this is situated in a broad state and international action "which focuses on preventative and developmental lines of activity (including pre-emptive action) rather than purely reactive military intervention." (2011b:1-2).

The internationalism of the UK is re-stated several times, and the situation of the UK internationally is suggested to offer it both a unique position and particular responsibility shown in the following quote:

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, responsible for the decision to use armed force in response to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression, the UK has a particular responsibility to act. (2011b: 3A-2)

The use of responsibility here invokes a particular ethical positioning of the UK Armed Forces' identity, the role of which is returned to below. The relationship between internationalism and humanitarianism is also seen through the engagement in different multilateral organisations, which involve a range of potential tasks. Through membership of the UN this includes conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilisation and also in alleviating humanitarian crises or the abuse of human rights (2011b:1-1A). Through the EU, this is humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and use of combat forces in crisis management, including peace enforcement (2011b:1A-2). Finally through the OSCE this includes the promotion of human rights and democratic institutions (2011b:1A-2).

A humanitarian ethic is also seen in descriptions of conflict prevention, where non-combat defence engagement 'may reduce or negate the need for military intervention to deal with emerging crises, develop an understanding of emerging threats or provide broader humanitarian assistance' (2011b: 3-2, not in 3rd Ed). The ethical presentation is also linked specifically to military capacities in the following quote, where 'disaster relief' is linked to insecurity and violence and the Armed Forces' ability to operate is offered as a solution:

Intervention may involve other government departments, non-governmental organisations or other international organisations, whose capability to provide disaster relief, for example, may have been hindered by insecurity and violence. The Armed Forces' capacity to operate effectively, underwritten by combat power and readiness to act, can have a critical role in countering those elements that seek to profit from ongoing instability. (BDD 2011:3-3)

Here the Armed Forces are attributed with characteristics associated with military masculinity – effectiveness, combat, action – and it is these capacities which form part of a masculine duty to humanitarian action, which is at the same time militarised. Military operations and engagement, particularly peacekeeping and stabilisation are put into a context invoking humanitarian relief, human rights, and democracy. These military operations are not just seen to be in the national interest, but also as part of a broader humanitarian internationalism, and a moral and ethical framework. This strategic and operational positioning is also reinforced in the ethical values ascribed to individual service personnel and British defence culture:

Most Servicemen and women have an intuitive feel for what is right and good and can be relied upon to deplore what is either illegal or unethical. This predisposition is reinforced by aligning the basic decency of

individuals with the values and standards of the Armed Forces, as organisations that are democratically accountable and responsible to the society they represent. (BDD 2011b: 4-9)

This is echoed in the attribute of British military culture of ‘humanity’ where “a combination of honesty, compassion and chivalry” gives personnel a “common moral compass” (BDD 2011:5A-5). However the relationship of this humanitarian, ethical, and international discourse is perhaps best seen in a quote used to describe ‘Duty’, attributed to Lord Salisbury:

‘Our first duty is towards the people of this country, to maintain their interests and their rights; our second duty is to all humanity.’
(2011b:5A-4 emphasis in original).

The British nation clearly has precedence, but the quote also articulates a clear ideal commitment to a broader collective humanity which itself forms part of the conceptualisation of the British military as an ethical organisation. The narrative of humanitarianism, ethics, morality and responsibility as part of a particular identity construction, is returned to below.

Forming the Nation

The contribution to the nation is also seen as broader than protection and defence of the national interest. The Armed forces are positioned as a key part of the nation itself. The quote below shows the ideals they ascribe to the nation as a whole, and the role of the Armed Forces as contributing to these ideals.

Apart from their primary roles in support of security and defence policy, the Armed Forces provide an important and distinctive strand in the fabric of the nation. They promote the ideals of integrity, discipline, professionalism, service and excellence, and also embody much tradition, which helps promote a sense of regional and national identity, stability and cohesion. The Armed Forces also represent a considerable repository of skills and talent, corporate memory, national character and heritage. (2011b:5-11)

Rather than external to the Nation or subordinate to it – the Armed Forces are integral to the nation. Through this both the British nation and the Armed Forces are described in idealistic, positive and almost romantic terms. The quote here draws on a temporal framework – tradition, character, and heritage, give a teleological sense of development in a section looking to the Armed Forces ‘into the future’. The ideals of warfighting ethos (explored more fully below) emerge through the prism of patriotism, of duty to the nation first embodied in the idea of ‘ultimate sacrifice for the Nation’ (2011b:5-10). The necessity of this Nation to warfighting is expressed in the attribute of patriotism as an attribute of the British way of war:

Patriotism manifests itself as a collective and individual attachment to the idea of Britishness and the values and way of life that it represents. Owing to history, training and cultural influences, it also engenders the belief that the British Serviceman or woman is a match for any opponent. (2011b:5A-3)

The doctrine self-consciously gives a narrative of idealised ‘Britishness’, and a notion of British superiority, rooted in vague invocation of British history, training and culture (and not levels of defence spending for example). The Armed Forces both are a part of the Nation and are in service to it simultaneously.

This section shows the way the purpose of the Armed Forces is articulated within the doctrine – primarily for the defence not only of the nation but also to a wider notion of ‘national interest’. Secondary to this, the British Armed Forces are also seen as a humanitarian force, acting ethically in line with international human security agenda. However, rather than simply a cosmopolitan idealism, this humanitarianism is linked heavily to British values, and the responsibilities of a powerful nation on the international stage. This links to the presentation of the Armed forces as placing a role in the fabric of the British Nation – embodying certain ideals ascribed to ‘Britain’ and deploying a self-conscious patriotism. The following section looks at how these purposes are seen to be achieved, translated into the depiction of the practices of the British Armed Forces.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

British Defence Doctrine is focused at the higher strategic and operational levels of defence, rather than tactical which is covered by subordinate publications. However, the doctrine does still cover the ‘how’ of achieving the functions described in the previous section. Somewhat unsurprisingly, this is through the use of force. *British Defence Doctrine* states that “Military power is the ultimate instrument and expression of national power from coercion through to the deliberate application of force” (2011b:1-7). There are however particular constructions about how that force is used, generated, sustained and deployed. The quote highlights the two most prevalent themes, which are explored in this section. The first is that of force-as-threat used as coercion or deterrence to achieve influence. The second is using force directly in combat, and the associated ‘warfighting ethos’. After these two themes the section then moves to look at the less prominent but present theme of professionalism.

Force as threat: coercion, influence, and deterrence

While physical destruction remains a necessary aspect of military activity, emphasis also needs to be placed on shaping perceptions through the co-ordinated, focused application of both physical and psychological means. (2011b: 2-13).

In the foreword to *British Defence Doctrine* the Chief of the Defence Staff¹³ points to the continuity in higher level doctrine, but also flags up that the fourth edition “also places additional emphasis on using force or the threat of it for coercion and its subordinate principle of deterrence; an important and fundamental tool of the military craft.” (2011: iii). The use of force not in and of itself but as a means

¹³ The professional head of the Armed Forces

or threat to coerce or deter is a repeated theme¹⁴. It is most apparent in the first chapter, which under the heading of “The Utility of Force” dedicates several pages to coercion. It argues that “coercion [...] is inevitably at the heart of UK Defence Policy, even if it is rarely expressed using that particular word” (2011b: 1-16). This section draws a distinction between compelling and deterring behaviour, the latter being more ‘attractive’ as it is more ‘easily presented as legitimate’ (2011b: 1-16). The principles of coercion are listed as: credibility of threat, effective communication; control of escalation and capability that underpins threats. (2011b:1-18). The focus on coercion is linked to the credibility of threat (see also 2011b: 1-8, 1-16) and ultimately the potential to successfully wage war underpins the ability to threaten to coerce and deter.

Combat: the Warfighting Ethos and Offensive Spirit

...because their warfighting ethos idealizes combat, the actions that commanders have preferred to take have been typically conventional military engagements: defence, firefights, raids and strikes (King 2010: 324).

At its heart is the notion of an offensive spirit, which imbues forces with confidence, encourages enterprise and a determination not to cede the initiative, as well as promoting a culture of success and achievement (*British Defence Doctrine* 2011b: 2-5)

The ability to threaten force is only provided by the ability to wield it and the theme of coercion is underpinned by the emphasis on the abilities of the UK to ‘project force’ and act as an offensive, warfighting military. The doctrine argues that the UK’s warfighting capability, is the source of hard power and deterrence (2011b: 1-10). The ‘offensive spirit’ referred to above is seen as a central part of the Armed Forces. This spirit is also signalled in the choice of cover image - a triptych representing each of the Armed forces. The naval picture shows the air-defence destroyer HMS Daring on the sea, the army picture a soldier in full battle dress with assault rifle and the air force a Eurofighter Typhoon at take-off. These images suggest a warfighting stance showing combat ready armed forces.

The doctrine argues that states need military capabilities that “sustain credible deterrence, reinforce diplomatic and economic instruments and ultimately provide effective fighting power” (2011b:2-12). Fighting power underpins other aspects. Chapter 4 is dedicated to “Fighting Power” and focuses on the capacity to fight and the creation and maintenance of that capacity. The quote opening the chapter stating that ‘Where fighting spirit is lacking everything else is a waste of time’ establishing combat as the central emphasis of the armed forces (2011b:4-1). Chapter 5 draws the previous chapters into a

¹⁴ Particular theorised in the first chapter at 2011b: 1-6, 1-8, 1-10, 1-11, and 1-16 to 1-20. There are also mentions throughout also at 2011b: 2-12 3-6, 3A-1, 5-11.

particularly ‘British’ manifestation of war. It is this chapter that expressly lays out a ‘Warfighting Ethos’:

A warfighting ethos, as distinct from a purely professional one, is absolutely fundamental to all those in the Armed Forces. [...] Notwithstanding the proportion of their career engaged in duties other than warfighting, it is essential that all Servicemen and women develop and retain the physical and moral fortitude to fight, when called upon to do so (2011b:5-10).

As we see in the quote above, even when their work is not directly related to warfighting, all military personnel are envisaged necessarily having the capacity to fight. This is further echoed by the stated attributes of the British Military Culture in the Annex to the chapter where ‘Courage’ and ‘Offensive spirit’ are listed first. The implications of the warfighting ethos and the offensive spirit in identity are returned to later. Here, the application of offensive military force and a warfighting stance are seen as the central practice of the British Armed Forces. The quote however also recognises the professional ethos, which is explored in the following section.

Professionalism, and the Integrated Approach

Warfare is thus a fundamentally human activity, but it is also an increasingly complex venture that demands a highly professional approach. (2011b: iii)

Alongside the ‘warfighting ethos’ and ‘offensive spirit’ in the previous section there was reference also to a ‘professional ethos’. The idea of the military as a profession and embodying professionalism as a virtue as seen in the quote above, is repeated in the text¹⁵. A section is dedicated to outlining the professional ethos. The cultivation of which is seen as part of generating ‘Moral Cohesion’ or the moral fortitude to fight: “An exemplary professional ethos, combined with an appealing cultural identity and military reputation, is a powerful moral force in its own right.” (2011b: 4-8).

The professional ethos here is about generating an particular attachment to the Armed service in question. However a more generalised professionalism is also appealed to, linked to the self-esteem and satisfaction of personnel achieved through “belonging to a highly professional body of men and women” (2011b:4-8). Similarly, professionalism is depicted as a desirable attribute of a leader (2011b:4-10) and associated with skilled practice and excellence. The doctrine suggests that:

An emphasis on professional competence engenders an uncompromising approach to training, to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to prevail in the most challenging situations. (2011b: 5-1)

¹⁵ See mentions on pages 2011: iii, 1-12, 4-4, 4-8, 4-10, 4-11, 5-1,5-3, 5-11, 5A-2, 5A-4

The relationship of professionalism and military identity and its gendered nature will be explored in later sections. The point here is the way the practice of professionalism offers a means to achieve military purpose, which is different although related to the wielding of force. It provides a remit for a broad range of activities and identities both including combat and beyond it. The balance between the narratives of warfighting and professionalism (by no means oppositional concepts) shows some signs of shift across the publications of doctrine, with professionalism more noticeable in the latter publications. Professionalism is mentioned more frequently in more recent publications and warfighting less as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Showing Relative Counts of References to Professionalism and Warfighting in Editions of British Defence Doctrine

Edition	Date Released	References to:	
		Professionalism	Warfighting
4 th Edition	November 2011	21	12
3 rd Edition	August 2008	19	22
2 nd Edition	October 2001	6	24

This is potentially indicative of a shift towards an increasing emphasis on professionalism, and decline in warfighting as an ideal in the official narratives of the Armed Forces. This point is argued by King (2013) who documents a rising importance of professionalism in the motivations of the combat soldier in contemporary volunteer forces.

One aspect of professionalism is seen in the Integrated Approach, a recurring phrase throughout *British Defence Doctrine*. The Integrated Approach, essentially embodying a multi-agency approach to problem solving, is one which necessitates the British Armed Forces to work consistently with other governmental departments, and relevant international agencies. This is linked to the idea of military professionalism, which proves a common ground and the ability to work with other ‘professionals’ (such as civilian civil servants or NGO staff). The Integrated Approach has been particularly relevant to the counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, where civil-military relationships are emphasised in the literature, and in practice the complexities of domestic and international politics are foregrounded.

WHO ARE WE?

British Defence Doctrine is itself expressly concerned with producing a coherent narrative of identity for the British Armed Forces, and it specifies the roles the Armed Forces fulfils in state structure, national policy and wider international and domestic society. It states that cohesion and a collective

identity, or cultural identity - an 'esprit de corps' - is an important part of the 'moral component' or getting people to fight (2011b: 4-7, 4-8 see also 2-4, 2-7 for cohesion as part of military effectiveness). Articulating a clear narrative of identity is seen as a necessary part of an ability to garner forces to fight.

Moral cohesion depends on cultural solidarity, shared experiences, a common sense of worth, appropriate discipline and an expressed collective identity, which is sustained by shared common values and standards. It embodies genuine and deep comradeship that endures even as the experience of violence and fear of death and injury begin to pervade an individual's conscious and sub-conscious. Pride in belonging and fear of exclusion, best described by the term esprit de corps, reinforces unit identity and cements moral cohesion. (2011b: 4-7)

In part a function of *British Defence Doctrine* is in fostering this cohesion: laying out clear ethos and culture for the British armed forces, which is then echoed throughout subordinate doctrine. The publication serves not only an internal audience, but publically released it also represents the military to external actors.

British, Armed, Force

The identity of the British Armed Forces is rooted in notions of 'Britishness' and draws on both spatial and ethical constructions to construct the UK. The UK is constructed as international, and western, positioned centrally in the international community, with reference to its relationship with the US, and other international partnerships such as NATO, the UN, EU and the G8 and G20 (2011b:1-3, 1-13, 1-A). The following lengthy quote draws together a number of different aspects which construct a British identity:

Although the UK's geographic position is physically more remote than other European countries from some direct threats, the UK is a prominent international player, with numerous interests overseas and a role in the maintenance of international stability and law. The Nation's stability, prosperity and well-being depend on international trade and investment more than most other developed economies. It is one of the world's largest outward investors and an important source of capital to the developing world. The UK is reliant on the supply of raw materials from overseas, on the secure transport of goods by sea and by air, and on a stable world that is conducive to trade. The UK's global perspective is also shaped by its responsibility for more than 10 million British citizens who live and work overseas and by its large immigrant population. (2011b:1-2)

The paragraph situates Britain spatially – at once distinct from Europe but also European referring to 'other European countries'. Predominantly we see Britain as globally situated within a web of trade and economic links, as well as through migration flows. The position of Britain within this environment is one of power and superiority. Britain is a prominent international player, a large investor – important. Britain is situated among other developed economies. These constructions are underpinned by the ethical constructions – Britain has a role in maintaining international stability and

law, and is important to the developing world, and responsible for its overseas citizens. This ethical constructions, we saw earlier in the idea of the armed forces as a humanitarian agent in the world, and this is constructed with and through a notion of 'Britain' as a powerful, moral agent.

The British Armed Forces are characterised within two seemingly contradictory temporal constructions – tradition, and modernity. Tradition is mentioned explicitly several times in *British Defence Doctrine* as a positive element of British Armed Forces (2011b:1-19, 4-8, 5-1, 5-11). The quote below explicitly references the imperial and colonial history of the UK:

The British Way of War derives from a deep-seated martial tradition and a pragmatic fighting culture that stretches back centuries in both historic narrative and public sentiment. It has been shaped by the UK's imperial and colonial experience, its continuous role in the forefront of world affairs (2011b: 5-1, also 3rd Ed 5-1).

Tradition is linked to military success and competence and positions the UK as prominent internationally. Studying the experience of predecessors "helps an individual face the challenge of duty and the rigours of combat." (2011b:4-8). The positive inclusion of imperial and colonial history contributes to the construction of the UK, highlights how the reliance on tradition can be simultaneously constructed along with the idea of modernity. There is a strong sense of adaptation to the contemporary operating environment and modernity, which can be cast as part of a linear construction of progress. The sense of tradition is one of drawing the success of the past, into the future.

Lessons from operations and deductions drawn from conceptual analysis and practical experimentation, inform both current practice and future capability development. (2011b:5-12)

Indeed, as well as the contemporary context the doctrine is anxious to emphasise future thinking concluding that "In short, doctrine must be refined to meet the demands of the first day of the next conflict, drawing upon, but not constrained by, experience of the last." (2011b:5-12). Historical British *tradition* and 'experience' is used to support the notion of a competitive *modern* fighting force. This can then justify continuing dominance over less 'modern' or 'developed' nations.

Masculinity & Comradeship

As well as through gendered constructions of nationality and warfighting, there is also a gendered construction of comradeship within the doctrine. The "British Way of Warfighting" is described in *British Defence Doctrine* linking together the practice of warfighting with a specifically British identity, described in the final annex of the doctrine. This British way of warfighting is listed as comprising the following desirable traits: Courage, Offensive Spirit, Loyalty, Comradeship, Determination, Patriotism, Duty, Sacrifice, Initiative, Ingenuity, and Humour. These ideas are also present throughout the second part of the document which describes characteristics for leaders, and ideal command traits. Each of the attributes of British ways is illustrated with select quotes from

prominent men - war leaders or theorists. This echoes research by Brown and Syme-Taylor (2012) that studied a northern European staff college and documented that “The study of “great whitemen” (as exemplary or toxic leaders) dominates the teaching about the military as an institution and no female leaders are used as examples” (Brown & Syme-Taylor 2012:458). The exclusive reference to ‘great whitemen’ in the doctrine is also reflected in the content of the quotes themselves. The following excerpt is taken from the attribute “Comradeship”:

Allied to loyalty is a sense of comradeship based on shared experiences, hardships and achievements. This is linked to a feeling that the military calling, with its implicit risks and dangers, is a worthy and valued profession.

‘Such a gallant set of fellows! Such a band of brothers! My heart swells at the thought of them.’ Vice-Admiral the Lord Nelson

‘All things were bearable if one bore them ‘with the lads’. Battles would have become terrible beyond endurance, if pride did not make a man endure what his comrades endured.’ Charles Carrington

(2011b:5A-2 emphasis in original)

The quote shows the explicitly gendered terms – fellows, brothers, lads, man – as well as implicitly in the links to hardship, risk, danger and pride; commonly invoked aspects of military masculinities (see Chapter 2). The invocation of the military as a profession here links masculinity and military professionalism (returned to in Chapter 8:160). *British Defence Doctrine* stresses the role of cohesion in creating the will to fight. The use of gender-neutral or inclusive language throughout the document shows the institutional moves recognising the increasing service of women. Here however, cohesion ‘shared comradeship based on shared experience’ is coded as masculine, making visible the presence of a naturalised male soldier, through the comradeship seen as definitive part of a British military warfighting.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has offered an analysis of the document *British Defence Doctrine*, a publication with considerable institutional weight in the British Armed Forces. The doctrine articulates the position of the British Armed Forces in relation to the wider British nation and state institutions, as well as in relation to international security structures and organisations. The doctrine serves to offer a narrative of identity internally – laying out the corporate identity of the Armed Forces for its own staff and personnel. It also offers an idealised version of the Armed Forces which is open to the general public, other state militaries, and government agencies they might work with. It is clear that the document not only lays out the core principles of the British Armed Forces, but consciously endeavours to articulate an identity for the Armed Forces and a positive role both in the UK and within a wider international system.

The doctrine depicts a clear narrative of the British Armed forces serving to protect, and promote British national interests, through the use or threat of military force. The notion of Britishness and Warfighting in the *British Defence Doctrine* form a mutually re-enforcing relationship. It is through 'Britishness' and the defence of Britain that warfighting is legitimated and justified. Similarly it is suggested that through maintaining a credible warfighting capability that Britain's 'way of life' as a prosperous, free, and powerful nation is understood. This is perhaps an unsurprising formulation, and the responses to the three questions – who we are, what we do, and how we do it correspond easily in the central articulation – As the British Armed Forces, we protect/project British National Interest, and we do it through wielding Armed Force. However, there are more complex identity constructions within the text. Britain is situated within the text as uniquely international, linked by trade, migration flows, political and defence relationships, favourably into a global system. This positioning is one of power and influence, in which British interests are embedded and in need of protection. This international role however, is supported and/or obscured by an ethical framing of Britain. Britain is seen as having responsibility, a moral duty to act and contribute to international security in the name of humanitarianism, democracy, or human rights, these are acts which would also simultaneously further British national interests. This humanitarian story deploys a gendered, imperial logic, where Britain is located in the role of benign, paternal protector ethically obliged to assist the lesser developed others, simultaneously enabling the furthering of British interests. These aspects of humanitarianism and nationalism then are not exactly in tension, mediated by correlating British interest with humanitarian action. A narrow interpretation of *British* national interests and territorial defence calls into question an expansive commitment to humanitarianism.

This story of humanitarianism is supported by the construction of idealised British military officers and personnel, and an ethical British way of waging war. The protection of national interests can be achieved through warfighting – the wielding of offensive military force – articulated in the text as a warfighting ethos, and offensive spirit. This is reflected in the idea of military personnel as warriors, where all are prepared to engage in combat – and are fighters first. However, there is also the presence of the 'professional ethos', and positive descriptions of the British Armed Forces as a force of professionals, invoking the idea of skilled, restrained force with expertise. The war-fighter and the professional are again not in opposition and are easily combined in the figure of a combat professional. However, the idea of the military professional seems to be growing, and references a different model of masculinity than that of the national-warrior. For King (2013) this suggests the possibility of a cohesive military identity which doesn't rest on masculinity the 'band of brothers' at all, but rather through shared commitment to professional expertise, a phenomenon which perhaps facilitated the increasing acceptance of women into combat roles in western militaries.

Despite the nuances available, the overarching narrative of identity within British Defence doctrine is that of white, civilised dominance. The protection of British National Interests, through an ability to wield force directly and correspondingly ensure global influence through coercion and threat is the

primary narrative. The Warfighting ethos and offensive spirit is central to ensuring this and that other activities are supportive or extraneous.

This chapter offered an analysis of the main trends in *British Defence Doctrine* as a context for the following three chapters. These chapters shift focus to look at lower levels of doctrine which deal with specific aspects of military practice, rather than the broad level considered here. The following documents analysed all reference *British Defence Doctrine* drawing authority from citing it, and are authored in reference to it. Despite this, as will be seen in the following chapters, there are by necessity different constructions of a British military identity. The practices they depict are not those of combat or warfighting, but rather non-combat practices which were brought to the fore by the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. .

CHAPTER 5. CULTURE AND THE HUMAN TERRAIN

The whole point of developing cultural capability has come from a very firm operational need. All recent post-operational tour reports from commanders at all levels have identified that we have not been doing cultural understanding well enough. (Lt. Col Windmill, launch of DCSU on MoD 2010e)

Nearly every aspect of Iraqi life has been affected by the occupation, and Iraqis have realized that, at heart, it is their culture that is being targeted: their history, collective memory, values, modes of expression and ways of life. (Zangana 2009:151)

INTRODUCTION

If successful counterinsurgency involves ‘winning’ the population, understanding that population quickly becomes paramount. The first quote above is indicative of the mood of the British Armed Forces that they weren’t ‘doing’ cultural understanding well enough to serve their current operational needs. This chapter focuses on the doctrinal response to that perceived need, analysing the document *Joint Doctrine Note 4/13 Culture and the Human Terrain* (from now on *Culture and the Human Terrain*) released in 2013. As with the previous chapter, it analyses the construction of identity within the doctrine, looking at the ways in which identity is constructed in relation to that perceived need. It uses the three questions framework tracing the narrative of what purpose cultural capacity serves, the practices involved in improving ‘cultural understanding’ and who is understood to perform them: all aspects integral to the construction of a coherent identity.

This chapter focuses on the British military development of cultural understanding, but it does so with a consciousness of the wider pattern of global power relations. Porter (2009) writing about the military turn to culture, argues that the periodic rediscovery of cultural approaches to war is a response to an ‘imperial crisis’. As the second quote above from a diaspora Iraqi woman and fierce opponent of the occupation of Iraq suggests, the focus on culture in counterinsurgency can be viewed through multiple lenses. It was the rapid descent into insurgency and civil war in Iraq which sparked an intense effort lead by the US to ‘do culture’ better (Porter 2009:6). Rather than a benign attempt to reduce the impact of war, which ‘improved cultural capacity’ might suggest, Zangana’s words remind us that many Iraqis also saw their culture as a target, as actively changed and destroyed by those who were advocating to understand it better.

This chapter begins by briefly tracing the rising military and defence community interest in culture, in both the UK and the US – what has come to be labelled as a ‘cultural turn’. It looks at the perceived operational need for cultural capability, which emerged with the shift in strategy from a ‘kinetic’ enemy centred approach to a ‘population-centred’ approach. This section then looks at how this ‘turn to culture’ has been established in wider British doctrine, and provides the context in which *Culture*

and the Human Terrain is developed and released. The chapter then turns to the analysis of the doctrine. It uses the three questions introduced in Chapter 3 to analyse the documents. It asks what the purpose of improved ‘cultural capacity’ appears to be, how this is to be achieved and finally asks who the British Armed Forces are constructed to be within the doctrine.

This doctrine forms part of the military response to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan which foreground culture and linguistic capabilities as part of a population-centred counterinsurgency strategy. By situating cultural understanding as central to military work, it positions a non-combat, usually civilian, activity as central to warfighting. In doing so it disrupts the stable links between combat, military institutions and masculinity. Doctrine, bringing together lessons learnt from on the ground experience, with idealised policy commitments and strategic vision to produce a document that is taught and disseminated widely, offers a useful site on which to examine how identity is constructed in relation to understanding of practice and purpose of culture in the military context.

5.1 THE CULTURAL TURN & BRITISH DOCTRINE

... things that have been regarded as supporting or enabling functions such as deep cultural understanding (which includes fluency in languages), Human Intelligence or Civil-Military Cooperation will, in this environment [Future complex battlespace] be battle-defining. (MoD 2010b:16)

Knowledge of the cultural terrain can be as important as, and sometimes even more important than, the knowledge of the geographical terrain. This observation acknowledges that the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographical terrain. (General David Petraeus in Jager: 2007:1)

The potential significance of culture to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was recognised early in the campaigns, alongside the shift from conventional warfare to guerrilla campaign. The US military in particular became aware of the lack of cultural and linguistic expertise, and some of their earlier military failures were attributed to this lack. In 2004 in an address to the Armed Forces Committee to the House, later reformulated in the military journal *Proceedings*, retired General Robert Scales made the case for ‘culture-centric’ war which captured this mood. His case was made in part through reference to an apparent British expertise and comfort in moving in ‘foreign cultures’ (Scales, 2004:4). The idea of British expertise in the area of culture was positively attributed to imperial and colonial experience, and clearly dovetailed with corresponding reference to ‘successful’ British counterinsurgency approach.

This dynamic – of apparent British cultural expertise and a comparative US lack - is also seen in a controversial article written by Alywn-Foster in *Military Review*, a US defence journal. A British brigadier, Alywn-Foster, offered a sharp appraisal of early US military performance in Iraq in a US defence journal and some of his assessment was picked up by both UK and US mainstream press

(Norton-Taylor, 2006; Poole, 2006; Ricks, 2006). In particular the mainstream press selectively cited the following passage, highlighting US cultural insensitivity and an accusation of institutional racism:

Moreover, whilst they were almost unfailingly courteous and considerate, at times their cultural insensitivity, almost certainly inadvertent, arguably amounted to institutional racism. (Alwyn-Foster 2005:3)

The article itself, whilst critical, was more nuanced than this quote suggests. What both the Scales (2004) and the Alwyn-Foster (2005) articles show is the early correspondence of discourses on culture with fierce debate about the best strategic approach to fight the insurgency in Iraq at that time. The need to focus on culture was associated with competing approaches to counterinsurgency. An offensive/kinetic and technological approach to fighting the insurgency was argued to be failing. Simultaneously, a shift to population-centred approach demanded greater cultural expertise. As the population-centred counterinsurgency gained popularity and institutional support, so did the associated interest in 'culture'. This in turn reinforced the argument for a population-centred approach promising a smarter, perhaps even a gentler war (Cohen 2010).

The shift towards population-centred counterinsurgency by the US is often marked with the publication of US Counterinsurgency Field Manual (US Dept. of the Army 2006) and this held a prominent role for culture in its approach (see Porter 2009:7). At the same time there was also "a sudden efflorescence of workshops, military journal articles, grant competitions and job solicitations designed to leverage military use of cultural knowledge" (Gusterson 2011:281). Most notably in the US this included the initiation and funding of the Human Terrain System, an attempt to introduce a systematic analysis of the Iraqi and later Afghan population to facilitate military operations. Alongside attempts to systematise and organise data about the populations, the contracted civilian programme recruits and deploys social scientists - as part of Human Terrain Teams- to the field. The program was, and remains, controversial. The American Association of Anthropologists denounced the activity as incompatible with their code of ethics (AAA 2007) and the Network of Concerned Anthropologists formed to fight the (re)militarisation of their discipline (Gonzalez and Price 2007). The program's record was also questioned following the high profile deaths of three deployed civilian social scientists. It faced further critique from within defence circles, largely about the usefulness of the contribution and its effectiveness, not questioning the necessity to improve cultural capacity. Rather, it was argued that the out-sourced, pricey, civilian programme undermined the need to generate and maintain cultural capacity *within* the US military, deflecting resources away from improving the capacities of serving personnel (Connable 2009).

The role of cultural capacity has also had a particularly gendered edge, with many of the concerns about culture being exemplified by a need to respect and work within the dominant gender relations and norms of Iraq and Afghanistan; or at least military perceptions of them. This engagement with gender translates into a concern with and/or for women. It has been well documented that this concern has often been part of a rhetorical strategy, rather than translating into meaningful change for

women on the ground (Al-Ali and Pratt 2009: 80-85). One of the more commonly cited needs for cultural sensitivity is the appropriate searching of women and family homes and more broadly 'engagement' with women (Kilcullen 2006a:33). We can see this implemented in the Female Engagement Teams (FETs) where military women are trained to 'engage' with local women in Afghanistan, without violating cultural norms. Although a US military initiative, British servicewomen have also undergone the training programme and been deployed in Afghanistan. A similar UK initiative has also been operating (MoD 2010, 2011).

Indeed, many of these shifts in US military circles towards culture are echoed in the UK. The terminology of the 'Human Terrain' is evident in title of *Culture and the Human Terrain*, and the model of mapping human demographic and cultural data has been adopted and is explored in the subsequent analysis. As indicated above, at the beginning of the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, the UK was believed to have better cultural expertise, and more experience working alongside other cultures (Scales 2004, Cassidy 2005, McFate 2005:45). However, it was quickly reported that the UK too was lacking in cultural capability and a number of responses emerged.

The UK institutionalisation of culture capability emerged with the refocusing of British military effort to Afghanistan and was formalised in the creation of the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit (DCSU) launched in 2010 (MoD 2010). The ministry of defence describe this as being "set up in the spirit of counter-insurgency operations" and is particularly focussed on Afghanistan (MoD 2010). The DCSU co-ordinates cultural training within the Armed Forces, advises on cultural requirements and organises a pool of trained cultural advisers. The creation of the DCSU formed part of a wider reconfiguration to respond to linguistic and cultural defence requirements. The restructuring strengthens the ties between language and cultural capacity and the training is partially combined within the Defence Centre for Languages and Culture (DCLC) (MoD 2013e). The doctrine note *Linguistic Support to Operations* was released in March 2013 just a few months before *Culture and the Human Terrain*. *Culture and the Human Terrain* was as part of military adaptation to demands for cultural and language capacity from the decade of counterinsurgency warfare. Military capacities both doctrinal and institutional evolved throughout this period. *Culture and the Human Terrain* lists its linkages to other doctrine. As with all doctrine it suggests it should be read alongside *British Defence Doctrine*, but also *JDP 04 Understanding* and *JDP2-00 Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations (3rd Edition)*. It also suggests it is linked to *Security and Stabilisation: the military contribution (2009)*(2013a: iv).

Doctrinally the British Armed Forces have produced two doctrine notes which specifically lay out the military use for culture. The first *The Significance of Culture to the Military* was published in 2009 and has now been withdrawn and was replaced with *Culture and the Human Terrain* in 2013. There is a considerable difference between these two documents in both tone and content. The later publication shows a much more sophisticated understanding of 'culture' and reflects the development of the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit and language training. Their publication and development

reflects the growing interest in culture and concern at a lack of British military capacity during the campaigns. Outside of these two doctrines, the need for cultural expertise is also recognised in the doctrine *Security and Stabilisation: the military contribution* (2009) which repeatedly notes the importance of culture and also calls into question British capacity:

The UK's military structures are not currently optimised for the breadth of stabilisation tasks, in which mass matters¹⁶ and human factors, local context and cultural understanding are fundamental to success. (2009a:2-14)

Similarly Army Doctrine Publication *Countering Insurgency* repeatedly references the utility of culture (culture is referenced over 40 times – particular examples stressing importance at 1-6, 3-5, 10-6, 11-7/8) and also contains critiques of lack of capacity (11-7) . The idea of culture being a useful part of expertise is also reflected in the highest level of doctrine, with the more recent versions of *British Defence Doctrine* arguing that ‘cultural and historic factors are the most important of all’ (appearing in 2011:4-3 also 3rd Ed. 2008:4-2). The role of cultural capacity is also highlighted in doctrine note on *Peacekeeping* (2011:3-3) and particularly strong in AFM1:10 *Tactics for Stability Operations* which dedicates a chapter to it (2007: 2-1, 7-3, chapter 22 ‘Cultural Awareness’). In the wake of the wider military cultural turn and the commitment to the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan, culture has become a recurring feature of British doctrine.

5.2 CULTURE AND THE HUMAN TERRAIN

Culture and the Human Terrain was released publically in September 2013, replacing *The Significance of Culture to the Military* (2009) which was then withdrawn from circulation. The following section offers a detailed description of the doctrine note and its content is summarised, in order to provide a basis for the subsequent analysis. *Culture and the Human Terrain* is the shortest publication studied running to 79 A4 pages. It is structured into three chapters and the third chapter contains an additional two ‘Annexes’ with supplementary content.

Chapter 1 titled ‘Understanding culture’ is the longest chapter at 23 pages. The doctrine states that it “explains culture. It describes social structures, systems and organisations, as well as how people interact” (1-1). The chapter is concerned with defining and categorising culture. After offering initial definitions, it structures culture into five ‘cultural categories’: Social organisation, Political organisation, Economic organisation, Beliefs and values, and Interaction. A section is dedicated to each, further defining, categorising and offering explanations in each one.

¹⁶ Mass here, refers to the debates about number of personnel required for stabilisation and counterinsurgency operations, key to arguments around the effectiveness of the ‘Surge’ committing more troops to enable ‘secure and hold’ operations.

Chapter 2 is 12 pages long and titled “Culture and human terrain in the operating environment”. It states its aim as “to describe culture in the context of complex military Operations” (2-1). The chapter makes a case for the operational necessity of cultural capacity and offers several cautionary tales of cultural mistakes or misunderstandings. The final section goes through the three ‘physical environments’ air, land and sea, to establish the relevance of culture to each and illustrated with a boxed operational example.

Chapter 3 is 11 pages long, excluding the annexes. Titled “Specialist Cultural Capability” it “Describes the types of cultural capabilities available to us. It also shows how they are integrated into force preparation and operations” (3-1). This chapter is divided into five sections. The first “Cultural Information” lists different organisations and agencies in the UK which have access to ‘cultural information and expertise’. The second section looks at training and force preparation. It offers a typography of levels of cultural and language skills and the training or level required for different roles. The third section looks specifically at ‘the role of the cultural specialist’ and describes the responsibilities for individuals specifically tasked with providing cultural capabilities. Section 4 looks at the relationship between culture and intelligence operations. The final section is a short paragraph which briefly considers the cultural capabilities of allies and partners, including NATO.

Chapter 3 is supported by two ‘Annexes’. Both provide specific frameworks and models for working with culture and the human terrain. Annex 3A is two pages long and looks at where and how culture can be considered as part of the operational estimate¹⁷. Annex 3B is much longer at ten pages, and sets out a Human Terrain Analysis model. It lists tools and methods for analysis, including a list of questions to establish “Key human terrain considerations” in each of the cultural categories established in Chapter 1. There are five analytic tools and diagrams outlined as well: an ASCOPE / PMESII grid, petal diagrams depicting group membership, association charts, kinship diagrams, and a conflict ‘drivers’ analysis.

The document concludes with a six page ‘Lexicon’ defining the terms used. This is divided into three categories – definitions valid only for this doctrine note, proposed new definitions, and already endorsed definitions. The structure of the document is summarised in Figure 7.

¹⁷ . The operational estimate is the formal planning framework provided for commanders within the UK military, to enable the assessment of the military situation, and problem culminating in the command decision (The operational estimate is laid out in detail in JDP 5-00 Planning p.2-32 – 2-40)

Figure 7: Showing the Structure of *Culture and the Human Terrain*

Preface
Chapter 1 Understanding culture
Chapter 2 Culture and human terrain in the contemporary operating environment
Chapter 3 Specialist cultural capability
Annex 3A – Considering culture and the human terrain in the operational estimate
Annex 3B – Human terrain analysis
Lexicon

5.3 PURPOSE, PRACTICE, IDENTITY: THE THREE QUESTIONS

The following section uses the ‘three questions’ framework introduced in chapter three to analyse the document. It uses the questions “What do we do? How do we do it? And who are we?” to trace the interweaving narratives of purpose, practice and identity which are constructed in the doctrine note. These questions serve to structure the analysis, and bring into focus the role of daily practice and its understanding in the construction of identity and simultaneously the impact of identity in framing practices and what purpose they serve. The analysis here is not intended to produce a linear formula or equation (what +how = who) but rather look at the relationships between these facets of identity, situating them in the wider military context.

Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 4/13, Culture and the Human Terrain, provides a broad understanding of the significance of culture to the military and practical guidance for cultural specialists on operations. It contributes to wider policies and training aimed at strengthening cultural capability, and should *inspire cultural thinking in everything we do*. (2003:iii emphasis mine)

The quote above is the stated purpose of the doctrine note, laid out in its preface, stressing broad understanding and practical guidance. The preface spells out a wide remit, making a role for ‘culture’ at all levels and areas of British military thought, training and practice. Whilst the above quote sets out an expansive approach for culture the doctrine note itself articulates a narrower role.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE DO CULTURE?

The narrative of what culture is for within *Culture and the Human Terrain* has three stands. The first ties the purpose of culture to support overall operational success and to offensive operations. Far more space within the text is given to the role of culture in Intelligence and Information¹⁸ activities. Finally, a narrative of relationship-building is present, but far less prominent than the first two.

¹⁸ The terms are capitalised when referring to specific military functions.

Operational success and offensive action

Whilst culture is most commonly linked to Intelligence and Information functions explored in the next section, the importance of culture is prominently stressed through links to operational success and offensive action. Throughout the document there is a slightly defensive tone, with the importance of culture being repeatedly re-iterated as or having a critical or a pivotal role (iii, 2-3, 2-9, 2-11). A failure to understand ‘culture’ is a risk as it could “significantly undermine operations (1-5) or as in the quote below lead to mission failure:

If we fail to appreciate the significance of culture, we increase the risk of mission or campaign failure. It creates barriers to successful interaction and can lead to alienation and may turn benign actors into adversaries. Cultural capability reduces these risks and creates an understanding of adversaries and local populations. (2-8)

Here, the importance of culture is linked to strategic level concerns. This echoes the *Future Character of Conflict* report quoted previously, that suggests that previously support functions including deeper cultural understanding in current and future conflict could be ‘battle-defining’ (MoD 2010b:16). The following paragraph highlights the hierarchical relationship between different kinds of military activities:

Cultural information has a pivotal role in providing commanders with an understanding of their area of interest and preparing them to engage with the population. In particular, this awareness can indicate which individuals, such as religious leaders or tribal elders, may hold influence at regional or national levels. Cultural capability can play a role greater than just influencing the local community, and can deliver a significant effect supporting the commander’s objectives. (2-3)

The above quote shows how ‘engaging’ with the population is linked to Influence, but this is positioned as “just” influencing the local community, a lesser role than its potential to “deliver a significant effect” to support the commander’s objectives. Similarly after a paragraph explaining how cultural capacities can facilitate working with allies, the following quote reasserts a focus on the adversary:

Notwithstanding that we need coherence and understanding among friendly forces, being able to predict what an adversary is doing, and why, is central to all military planning. (2-5)

Whilst ‘coherence and understanding’ is useful, predicting *adversary* behaviour is ‘central to all military planning’. The focus on the adversary is repeated in the second chapter which focusses on the role of culture in the contemporary operating environment (see for example 2-1, 2-5, 2-8). Alongside the adversaries there are attempts to link cultural capacity to offensive military action:

Cultural capability enables commanders to consider how military activity could achieve effect through lethal or non-lethal means. Cultural considerations may shape the balance of fires and manoeuvre, as well as providing specific support to information activities and outreach.

Ultimately, understanding culture across the spectrum of actors will be a major contributor in countering increasingly hybrid threats. (2-9)

Here, cultural capability is positioned as the potential decider between life and death, in the application of lethal force. Cultural considerations are linked to fires and manoeuvre, with the mention of information and outreach secondary. The final sentence positions cultural capability as a protection against 'threats'. This is echoed in an early mention that knowing how a population can react can 'protect our forces' (2-7) and a little later in an example of a cultural advisor able to diffuse a situation with the potential to develop into 'lethal incident' in a context of fratricidal shootings (2-11).

The language here is particularly evocative and relies on a particular frame of military identity. The references are to 'achieve effect', 'lethal and non-lethal means', 'fires and manoeuvres', 'spectrum of actors' and 'hybrid threats'. The language is reminiscent of that which Cohn termed technostrategic in her analysis of nuclear defence professionals discourse (1987:690). These defence professionals, Cohn argued, developed an approach to military strategic problems that reflected the technology used - mathematical modelling, systems analysis, game theory, linear programming. This was part of their language and thinking, which was also gendered, resting on an ideal of rational masculinity (Cohn 1987:690). Here, whilst the language is similar, the human subject matter of culture is not easily reconciled with the abstracted, technological approach. Nonetheless, understanding, culture and outreach are situated within this framing and within the context of the use of lethal force, fires and manoeuvres. Culture is linked to offensive activities, and evokes a combat-centred military masculinity. However, more commonly seen in the document is culture linked to Intelligence and Information, analysed next.

Information & Intelligence

The theme which emerges most prominently in the doctrine is culture as contributing to the interrelated areas of Information, Influence and Intelligence. There are distinctions between these three areas, although there is also considerable overlap. Information Operations can be understood as largely synonymous with propaganda. This covers the collection of data and its review, management and dissemination for the purpose of a specific message or theme and additionally the protection of one's own 'information'¹⁹. Information Operations are a broad area and encompasses Influence activities. Influence more specifically refers to activities undertaken to affect the will of those

¹⁹ The official definition of Information Operations is the "Coordinated military activity undertaken to affect decision-makers in support of political and military objectives by influencing their will, affecting their decision-making processes and shaping their understanding, while protecting our own decision makers and processes" (MoD 2002:1) The term 'Information' is also used in defence circles to refer to a sphere of operations – similar to Land, Maritime, and Air and Space – which encompasses cyber-attacks, and assaults on or defence of informational capacities. This is more relevant with the increasing use of complex battlefield information systems, which relay data in real time – presenting a technological advantage.

targeted²⁰. Finally the term Intelligence is defined as the “directed and co-ordinated acquisition and analysis of information to assess capabilities, intent and opportunities”²¹ (MoD 2011d:I-2). The three are combined here, as the interrelated nature of the activities means they are often referred to together within *Culture and the Human Terrain* and activities described could be interpreted as fulfilling more than one area or purpose. Table 5 documents the references in the doctrine to the areas of Information (including Influence) and Intelligence.

Table 5. Showing the mentions of Information, Influence and Intelligence in the doctrine Culture and the Human Terrain

Function	Occurrence in text	Specific references where culture is linked to the function
Information	44 ²²	Preface iv, 2-5, 2-9, 2-11, 3-2
Influence	36	2-3 , 2-5, 2-6, 2-9, 3-9,
Intelligence	63	Preface iv, 1-1, 2-6, 2-8, 3-9 to 3-11, 3B-2

The doctrine opens with the preface suggesting its audience to be those involved in ‘intelligence and information activities’(iv) and it directly links to the doctrine *Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations*, which is also cited twice in the text (on pages 2-1 and 3-9). The input of cultural understanding or capacity is seen to aid decision-makers (whether at tactical, operational or strategic level) and to contribute to the intelligence and informational sphere.

Section 4 of the third chapter covers the “Cultural Input to Intelligence” and expressly addresses the overlap, with a focus on the contribution of culture to Intelligence, largely in relation to ‘collection’, the second stage of the intelligence cycle. Cultural specialists are described as “an important non-dedicated collection means for matters pertaining to human terrain” (3-10), although their advisory role is described as more central. The presentation of the new role of deployable cultural specialists

²⁰ There are two current definitions of Influence Activity. The more precise: “Influence Activity comprises any activity whose primary purpose is to influence will, and is achieved by the promotion of identified themes to target audiences through messages. Influence Activity seeks to predispose, persuade, convince, deter, disrupt, compel or coerce target audiences to adopt a particular Course of Action or to assist, encourage and reassure those that are following a desired Course of Action.” (MoD 2011d:I-2) and the wider “influence activity the capability or perceived capacity to affect the behaviour of someone or something.” (MoD 2002:1).

²¹ The full quote reads Intelligence is “The directed and co-ordinated acquisition and analysis of information to assess capabilities, intent and opportunities for national exploitation by leaders at all levels to further national interest.” (MoD 2011d:I-2)

²² This excludes three occurrences in the copyright instructions.

draws a distinction between them and dedicated intelligence ‘assets’ (3-9). However, they are seen as closely related to Intelligence functions having a ‘reciprocal relationship’:

Reciprocal relationship between J2²³ and cultural specialists, which helps specialists plan and conduct their activity ... cultural specialists will often raise intelligence requirements, as well as help answer them. (3-11)

Whilst there is clear overlap drawn here and potential for collaborative working, the new cultural specialists have a different, broader remit. Contributing to the intelligence environment and providing necessary information to advise or assist in decision-making and influence is prominent within the doctrine, either through advice from specialists or through more culturally aware decision-makers. The following section looks at the theme of relationship-building.

Relationship-building

In other doctrine addressing population-centred counterinsurgency, cultural capacity is commonly linked to relationship-building. Both *Security and Stabilisation* and Army Doctrine Publication *Countering Insurgency* express the need to develop ongoing relationships: with the local civilian population, the ‘host nation’ government and security forces, other British agencies and multinational partners (see for example JDP3-40 vii, 4-4, 4A-3 or AFM Vol 1. 10 p. 1-10). This also emerges as a prominent theme in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and to a lesser extent in *Understanding* analysed in the following two chapters, which expressly link culture and relationship-building. However in *Culture and the Human Terrain* the discourse is more subdued; there isn’t a consistent narrative of cultural understanding and capacity being central to relationship-building. However there are some mentions which situate relationship building as a function of improved cultural awareness or could be interpreted as facilitating relationships or avoiding interpersonal conflict. Prominently the preface sets out an understanding that the human dimension of conflict “enables us to enhance relations with our existing allies, friends and strategic partners, and to nurture emerging relationships “(iii). Similarly in the heading of the first chapter it is established that:

If we understand our own culture, it will be easier to effectively engage with others, either in peaceful interaction or to gain the advantage in times of conflict. Cultural understanding is crucial in identifying both our vulnerabilities and opportunities, and to dispel any automatic dislike or fear of those from other countries. (1-1).

These quotations both show cultural understanding as facilitating relationships for peaceful means. However in the above quote the ‘peaceful interaction’ is paired equally with ‘gaining the advantage’.

In the first chapter several of the explanations of culture make reference to relationship building – so it is suggested that “understanding social norms is essential if we wish to engage politely and

²³ J2 refers to the Operational Intelligence Division of the Permanent Joint Head Quarters (PJHQ).

productively with another culture” (1-9) and that “Offering a cup of tea is rarely just about satisfying someone’s thirst. It can also be a small, but important, part of building a relationship” (1-22). However, the points here are intended as general advice or information about human culture(s) and aren’t linked to military behaviour. They aren’t suggesting that polite engagement or building a relationship is a particular military goal.

One paragraph identifies operating as part of a coalition and partnering and mentoring as part of operations which ‘are most likely to succeed if we understand national, organisational and individual cultures’ (2-4). As we saw previously the ability to influence is seen as reducing risk and potentially ‘the need for lethal action’ (2-5). These quotes however are situated between paragraphs which focus on ‘adversary’ behaviour as ‘central to all military planning’ (see above) and valued above these relationship aspects. The potential of creating more adversaries due to ‘cultural misunderstandings’ is repeated several times (see 2-2 potentially spiralling into mistrust, increased tensions, or attacks from outside or inside” and the example on 2-11) but the avoidance of misunderstandings is highlighted, rather than a focus on positive relationship-building. Similarly indicating that air operations rely on host nation support which “requires careful and culturally sensitive cooperation” (2-12) shows relationships as a means, not an end in itself. So a paragraph which suggests that the amount of time cultural advisors spend ‘interfacing’ with locals “allows them to build relations” is used to emphasise that they can then contribute to “joint action”(3-9).

The clearest examples of relationship building are actually seen in small case studies presented as boxed excerpts. Here cultural advice is depicted as informing activities with relationship-building goals. One gives an example of a failed attempt to ‘make the women’s life easier and build rapport with the villagers’ (2-6) and another describes a failed attempt to reassure villagers with low flying aircraft (2-12). Both failures are explained as due to a lack of cultural advice. The example of the embarkation of a cultural specialist on the HMS ALBION is used to illustrate cultural relevance in the maritime environment. The box concludes “feedback emphasised the value of the embarked cultural specialist and how the capability promoted good relations” (2-10) showing the clearest example of the role of cultural capability in facilitating positive defence relationships

There is a theme which links culture to relationship-building visible in *Culture and the Human Terrain*. Whilst it forms part of the introduction to the document, it is inconsistently present in the text. It appears predominantly in boxed case studies which describe military practice, rather than in the core text perhaps suggesting a mismatch between the articulation of the role culture in the doctrine and practice on the ground. . The theme of relationship-building is common in UK Armed forces general doctrine on stabilisation and counterinsurgency and is prominent in *Partnering Indigenous forces* and *Understanding* analysed in the following chapters

In *Culture and the Human Terrain* the dominant themes are that improved cultural capacity is critical to mission success, improving understanding of the adversary and even assisting offensive actions, although primarily contributing to Intelligence and Information activities.

HOW DO WE DO CULTURE?

The previous section looked at the functions envisaged for culture as part of the military practice, tracing its linkages to information and intelligence provision and specific military objectives. This section shifts focus from the aims of the British military turn to culture to look at the practices laid out in the doctrine for developing cultural capability. These practices focus on the development of generic skills of self-awareness and the development of empathy. These skills are often perceived to be the antithesis of military training and the practice of warfighting. This section also considers how the doctrine ‘does gender’, understood as an aspect of the human terrain. Alongside these skills is the focus on culture as reducible to a set of facts which can be studied, mastered to produce expertise which is packaged and delivered to decision makers.

Self-reflection & Empathy

The doctrine consciously recognises that having a ‘culture’ is not specific to ‘Others’ but is universal for humankind. Developing this recognition for personnel is seen as a key part of developing cultural understanding. The opening of chapter one stresses:

Culture is not something that only other people have. As diverse as it is, all humankind has culture. Equally, individuals do not generally act randomly, they behave in ways that make sense to other people in their group. These ways are accepted and understood within their group due to shared ideas about what is normal behaviour. But, people rarely recognise or understand the cultural perspective of their own attitudes, beliefs or behaviour. This is deeply embedded within their psyche and regarded as habitual.

If we understand our own culture, it will be easier to effectively engage with others, either in peaceful interaction or to gain the advantage in times of conflict. Cultural understanding is crucial in identifying both our vulnerabilities and opportunities, and to dispel any automatic dislike or fear of those from other countries. (1-1)

In order to fulfil the ‘crucial’ requirement of Cultural understanding, military personnel must learn to recognise their own cultural situation and their own perspective as one amongst many. This practice of self-reflection and analysis is stated as necessary for military personnel to understand their own culture as a means of relating to others. This is seen in small reflections throughout the first chapter on what is imagined to be the readers’ own culture, such as a boxed reflection on the different armed services cultures (1-3) and again here:

In the West, an individual’s position within society is often thought to be primarily determined by individual achievement, be that in business or academic career, sporting or artistic success. However, in other societies (and sometimes in our own) status is often inherited through being born

into a particular family, ethnic group or religious lineage. In the British military, status is associated with rank or an appointment which, in turn, is based on experience and evidence of success in the past. Outside of our professional role, however, our status in the community is dependent on the prevailing context. (1-12)

Whilst this is obviously a simplistic example, pitching an imagined western individualism, situated against (presumably 'eastern') familial, ethnic or religious orientation, it nonetheless shows a practice of self-reflection. Here, noting the non-universality of the imagined Western culture is a means of developing understanding of the particularity of experience. The development of this practice is revisited in Chapter three which recognises the time involved in "overcoming personal perceptions" (3-1). The importance of this self-reflection is also seen later in Chapter 3 where three types of cultural training are laid out: 'General Understanding,' 'Area-specific training' and 'Self-awareness' training. The latter is described as:

Within general training, a complementary training approach is cultural self-awareness training. This enables individuals to identify and understand their own subconscious cultural traits and rules. By understanding personal norms, individuals can approach unfamiliar scenarios and gauge others' reactions better. Combining general and self-awareness training, focuses an individual's mind on other cultures and is an excellent foundation for specific training. (3-4)

Self-awareness is seen as a central practice to cultural awareness. Overlapping with and building from self-reflection are references to practices of empathy. Empathy is the ability or practice of 'putting yourself in another's shoes' or feeling the way you imagine someone else to feel. This is understood to be a critical part of developing meaningful connections with others and as a part of peacebuilding and conflict reduction (Duncanson 2013:155-160). A boxed excerpt entitled "Viewing ourselves as others view us" effectively presents an exercise in developing empathising techniques:

Images of peacekeeping troops wearing UN blue berets and patrolling in conflict zones around the world are pretty unremarkable to the British public and symbolic of well-intentioned intervention. The views of the British public, however, could be significantly different had they seen African or Asian UN peacekeepers patrolling Northern Ireland during the 1980s/1990s. It is sometimes helpful to consider such examples of foreign military intervention in our own context, to challenge our assumptions and interpretations about others. (1-5)

Here the attempt is to relate to civilian populations and quite radically shift a Euro/American centred view of peacekeeping. This decentring of one's own experience is seen in chapter two, in reference to combatants rather than civilians. Personnel are admonished to appreciate 'an adversary's motivation from their perspective, rather than our own' (2-5). Returning to civilians, a similar recommendation is made on the following page in reference to understanding what 'local people' think is important "rather than what we think should be important" (2-6). This point is well-illustrated by a boxed example of a failed attempt at 'rapport building'. It describes an incident where British forces unasked provided a new water source to 'help' Afghan women. The women, it transpires valued the

walk to their current water supply, and in an act of resistance repeatedly sabotaged the new one (2-6). This demonstrates the practical requirements to ‘engage’ the local population.

In Chapter 3 a similar requirement to adopt a different perspective is articulated where expertise “requires immersion into a culture and generally develops in concert with the ability to think with the same mindset.”(3-5). In the models developed for analysing the human terrain, its reiterated:

Their world, their perspective. Understanding the human terrain requires us to look at the world from the perspective of those who live there, rather than from our point of view. (3B-8)

Not only does cultural understanding and expertise require the collation and understanding of data, but an evaluation of the self and the ability to empathise with others and de-centre one’s own point of view. These are complex interpersonal tasks. Although the doctrine presents a range of skills for development of cultural awareness, these skills do not sit easily with military combat training and fighting. *The Significance of Culture to the Military* (2009), now subsumed by *Culture and the Human Terrain*, expressed the risks posed by developing cultural understanding candidly. The ability to dehumanize the enemy is seen as a useful technique, one that cultural knowledge and empathy could destabilise:

Dehumanising the enemy can be a useful technique in emboldening the warrior ethos and dealing with the stress of battle. Too much empathy, through enhanced cultural knowledge, could decrease objectivity and the ability to carry out operational requirements. [...] Excessively strong empathy with certain groups, or being perceived to have ‘gone native’, may bring into question the loyalty and objectivity of an individual within their own organisation. (MoD 2009:1-7)

This is combined with the idea that empathy may also overwhelm an individual’s primary identification with their own organisation, or at least their perception by others. In the updated section in *Culture and the Human Terrain* the same points are combined, and expressed minimally stating that “‘Over-immersion’ can occur when an individual becomes too deeply immersed and overly sympathetic within a different culture.”(2-8). A footnote that adds that “This can lead to commanders receiving advice from an unexpectedly biased perspective.” (2-8). Even though less clearly expressed there is still a concern over the development of more sophisticated cultural skills and too much empathy or sympathy with others.

Culture and the Human Terrain also draws this difference between cultural skills, and other military areas in looking at military personnel individual capacity to develop cultural skills. The doctrine lays out three skills levels in ‘culture’ – awareness, competence and expertise. The development of cultural expertise is the highest level and the text suggests:

It requires immersion into a culture and generally develops in concert with the ability to think with the same mindset. Developing expertise is a long-term process, requiring significant investment to provide cultural

immersion opportunities. Selecting individuals for such opportunities focuses on their aptitude to develop such expertise. The necessary attributes may not necessarily be those required for other military roles. (3-5)

Here a distinction is drawn between potential for cultural expertise and other military roles (presumably combat or other technical positions). Not all personnel may be capable of these skills, and they are presented as anomalous to other military tasks.

Doing gender

The doctrine contains an explicit definition or explanation of gender and gender roles in the first chapter, as a form of social organisation alongside kinship, ethnic groups, race, nationalism, and diaspora. Compared to references elsewhere in the doctrine hierarchy, gender is defined in a comparatively sophisticated way, adopting a differentiation between a “biological” sex and a socially determined “gender” which is mutable, and not fixed:

While sex refers to the biological differences between male and female bodies, gender is the set of ideas about the role of women and men within society. Gender therefore, describes the traits and behaviours associated with each sex. These traits and behaviours are fluid and they change both within a society over time, and within differing societies. Men and women are equally affected by the expectations of masculinity and femininity, though these expectations differ widely. The public and private roles of men and women can vary. Although in some societies women are restricted from participating in public, political or economic activities, they can be essential to financial decisions within a household, or resolving conflicts within a community. Gender relations affect all aspects of society, including the ways in which men and women work, the right of inheritance or the way that land and resources are used. (1-9)

Masculinity is directly referenced, and gender relations are understood to be widely influential. This is a marked difference from the previous doctrine *The Significance of Culture to the Military* (2009a). That document contained a much briefer section on gender entitled ‘gender issues’ and included in a section ‘practical issues’. It contained no explanation of gender, rather gender was reduced to a proxy for women, and there was an unclarified suggestion that gender might be appropriate for searches (2009a:4-6)²⁴. In *Culture and the Human Terrain* the gender paragraph is immediately followed by a second paragraph on ‘human security’ which introduced the idea of security on an individual rather than state level and is described as an ‘emerging theory’ (2013a:1-10). This paragraph also takes a

²⁴ The section reads “Gender Issues. The respective roles and status of males and females in a culture will influence how individuals interact with male and female superiors, peers and subordinates. Marriage and childbearing often significantly change the status of women and hence the appropriate ways of interacting with them. Knowledge of, and sensitivity to, gender issues can enhance credibility. An example where gender issues may be relevant is the conduct of searches, both of individuals and of female living-quarters.” (MoD 2009a: 4-6)

gendered definition of human security, and reiterates that women and men, girls and boys have different experiences of security and insecure environments.

This considerably more sophisticated understanding of gender than its predecessor is also accompanied by consistent use of non-gendered terms and pronouns throughout the document. Humankind is used over mankind, and service person or personnel is used rather than servicemen and women. This is a marked difference from other doctrine publications which tend to use the default masculine referents (See for example JDP 5-00 *Campaign Planning* (MoD 2013f) a second edition released at the same time where the commander is referred to consistently in the masculine and *Understanding* analysed in Chapter 6).

There are several other references to women within the text outside of these two paragraphs, which suggest another implicit understanding of women, which is contradictory. Under “economic organisations” an example explaining value uses women as an example of a commodity:

The value of something is often determined by what it can be exchanged for. This may include objects with sentimental value, livestock or even women for marriage. (1-13)

No attention is given to the significance of placing an economic value on women as an item for exchange. People around the world are sold or traded, but it is widely understood that slavery is a violation of human rights. The casual reference to women as traded ‘for marriage’ is normalising, and contradicts the previous understanding of human security, undermining women’s humanity by placing them alongside livestock. There is an explicit reference to people as men and women in relation to the expression of emotions in the section on interactions:

Different groups display emotions in different ways which have differing levels of Acceptance. This can be seen by the changes in our own society, where the sharing of feelings is encouraged for both men and women. (2013:1-23)

The sentence is not contrasted with another place or time where this may be different. Rather it seems to derive its sense from an understanding that ‘sharing feelings’ has (in Britain) been gendered, and previously associated with femininity, weakness and discouraged for men. Similarly a boxed excerpt on kinship focuses on patrilineal descent, mentions that:

In Oman, it is a source of paternal pride for a son to list the names of their fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers simply by asking ‘bin min’ (son of whom)? Also, in most societies descent through the male side of a family holds more status. (1-8)

This unquestioned reflection on gender relations prioritises male familial relationships. Similarly the kinship diagram suggestion in Annex 3B predominantly focusses on male descent with female family members more often being unnamed and referred to by relationship (e.g. ‘Wife’ and ‘daughter’). It is suggested “it is often important to know the birth order of brothers, as the eldest tends to have most

influence, or how a man is related to another man through marriage, as it will affect their relative status.”(3B-9). This engagement with the gendered relations works with a static notion of gender-relations, which serves to reinforce a continued prioritisation of men and erasure of women as social and political actors. One of the questions included in the Annex 3B asks “What are the roles of men and women?” in the list of questions to establish the basics of the human terrain (3B-4). While this is a basic introduction to including a consideration of gender in assessing culture, the question implies gender roles are fixed aspects of a culture. Particularly in times of war and insecurity, gender-relations are often reconfigured (Cohn 2013, and specific to Iraq see Al-Ali and Pratt 2009). Rather than politically contingent, gender relations are seen as social organisation. In the analytical tools recommended to produce the ASCOPE/PMESII grid Women’s representation is included as part of the socio-cultural organisations intersect rather than under politics, for example. This echoes the positioning of gender as a part of the ‘social organisation’ category.

Models and Human Terrain Analysis

Alongside the practices of self-awareness and empathy and the explicit framing of gender as fluid and changing, there is an alternative approach to ‘doing culture’ which focuses on the use of models and frameworks. The first chapter of the doctrine lays out how culture can be understood and thought about by the military. It provides definitions of culture, and as mentioned above, the chapter is structured around five categories – Social Organisation, Political Organisation, Economic Organisation, Beliefs and Values and Interaction. These categories are intended as a framework for thinking about culture to make the ‘task of understanding’ more ‘manageable’ (1-5). This translation of culture into a manageable framework is most clearly seen in Annex 3B which provides a number of analytic approaches and frameworks to analyse culture and ‘map’ the Human Terrain. These are

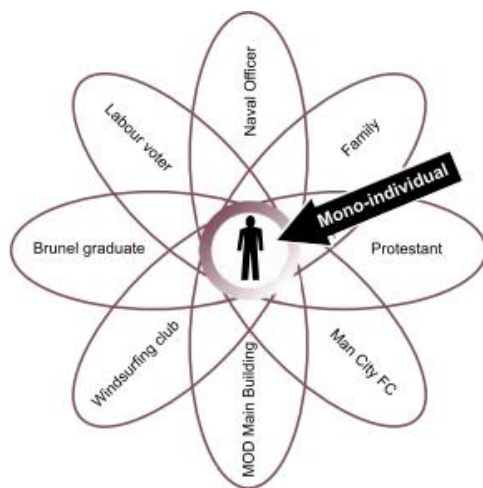


Figure 8. Example ‘petal’ diagram reproduced from Culture and Human Terrain (3B-8)

intended for “non-specialists” to initiate their investigation. It includes a 1.5 page list of questions, corresponding to the cultural categories introduced in chapter one, the use of petal diagrams to show overlapping identities for a single “mono-individual” (reproduced at Figure 8) and computer generated association charts, and kinship diagrams. The problem mapping PMSEII and ASCOPE frameworks, are combined for use in mapping exercise. The language here is again referencing a particular scientific or technical approach to culture similar again to the ‘technostrategic’ language identified by Cohn (1987) previously discussed. The use of the term ‘mono-individual’ in the petal diagram is distancing, and overly scientific choice of word, where ‘person’ would be equally

accurate²⁵. This approach has a different tone to the self-analysis and empathy; rather the focus is on amassing data about the human terrain, and mapping it in order to effectively feed into particular organisational structures (such as the operational estimate). It is a rational and scientific exercise, rather than a reflexive or empathetic process and invokes a rational/emotional gendered binary. This is particularly apparent in the selection of ‘tools’ introduced in Annex 3B-1 which provide actionable frameworks for the analysis of ‘culture’. These two modes of approaching culture are not mutually exclusive and clearly exercises such as producing ‘petal’ diagrams are intended to develop a broader understanding of social connections. However, it hints at a deeper underlying tension in the understanding of culture. In the earlier section of the doctrine culture is presented as dynamic and subject to change (1-3), however considerable portions of the text and particularly the models and frameworks work with the idea of a stable ‘Human Terrain’ - a field of humanity which can be mapped.

WHO ARE WE?

The previous sections looked at the functions of improving military cultural capacity and the practices involved. It showed the ties to instrumental functions – offensive action, mission success, Intelligence and Information activities and the tension between reflective and empathetic approaches to culture, and the systematic approach to mapping the human terrain. This section looks at the overt formulations of identity in the doctrine – the depiction of ‘who we are’. There is a cohesive sense of identity established in the doctrine with the frequent use of possessive group pronouns – ‘our’ and ‘we’. These refer either to an identity as the British armed forces, or as a British people. There are references to “our professional role” (1-12) or in our society (1-15, 1-23), our adversaries’ (2-1, 2-5), our understanding (2-1, 3-1) our approach (2-5), our forces (2-7), our culture (2-8) or “our Armed Forces” (1-3, 1-4, 2-1). Whilst the doctrine explicitly lays out the purpose of culture, and the means of using and applying culture, the question of ‘who we are’ is constructed through the representation of self and other in the text. This process is multiple, and complicated by the positioning of Self and Other not just in relation to each other in a simple binary, variously located in relation to the self through spatial and temporal constructions. This section analyses some of the themes, firstly looking at the construction of a British and Western identity, before looking more generally at identity construction.

Despite the prominence of the colonial and imperial legacy of the British Military in the general commentary associated with the cultural turn, seen for example in General Scales’ glowing review of British imperial practice, this history is largely unreferenced in *Culture and the Human Terrain*. The one exception to this is a single quotation of T.E. Lawrence heading the second chapter. This is in

²⁵ The origin of the term may be in a popular military article “Engaging with local people: more tea and fewer messages” (Tomlinson 2009) by a civilian MoD academic, which uses it in a discussion of multiple and overlapping identities and cites Levi-Strauss (1966:214 in Tomlinson 2009:296)

stark contrast to the doctrine note *Partnering Indigenous Forces* analysed in the following chapter which, as we will see, draws heavily on British imperial experience. Despite the somewhat conspicuous absence of explicit references to this legacy the British Armed Forces are implicitly situated within a 'Western' cultural tradition in the text. There are six references to the West or western cultural norms (on pages 1-12, 1-21, 1-22, 2-3) which appear intended to reflect the reader's own identity. For example, there is a reference to "Western" hospitality norms for hosting which are unexplained, and situated against those of Japan (1-22). These brief mentions situate Britain as part of an expansively understood west, contrasted against multiple other places.

There are also references to a specifically 'British' culture. For example a reference is made to a British cultural change to outlaw slavery (1-3), a propensity to queue (1-3) and British attitudes to eating dog or horse meat (1-22). In considering nationalism understood to be a 'recent invention', it notes that:

Equally, a nation can refer to a specific geographical area with politically defined borders, where ethnic groups do not necessarily originate from. For example, immigrants from Somalia or the Caribbean can be considered part of the British nation (1-9)

Within these ideas, particularly the idea that British culture once tolerated, then outlawed slavery and the quote above where Somalian or Caribbean people 'can' be considered British, suggests a British identity constructed also in relation to race. To be British without question, is to be without a family history of migration or slavery – and by implication white. The positioning of the UK in relation to other nations is also seen in the consideration of political systems. The doctrine recognises that "The UK model of governance (the state) is not the only way of organising people"(1-11) and proceeds to outline three possible models of governance: centralised systems, leadership systems and tribal or segmentary systems. The UK is positioned as a centralised system, as opposed to an idea of leadership systems which follow a populist leader and 'tribal or segmentary systems' which are bafflingly described as 'non-hierarchical'. For the latter 'tribes in the Arab world' are given as an example. The description of tribes is simplistic, as extended kin, and the doctrine explains that tribes may overcome local conflicts to co-operate when necessary against a greater threat. This is explained using the example of English football supporters, who will support a national team despite fierce interclub rivalry. The effect of this summary of political systems is to produce a simplistic idea of developed and functioning centralised states, opposed to both under-explained and somewhat confusingly presented alternatives (1-11). Britain, along with other centralised states are positively identified with developed, rational political system. Similarly in looking at the economy, the doctrine notes:

The economy in some sub-Saharan African societies is based on livestock trading, and selected leaders accumulate wealth and influence. In comparison, the UK is a state with a developed market system and extensive trade networks. (1-14)

The UK again is depicted as a developed system in comparison with the generalised reference to sub-Saharan African societies. Whilst some societies' economies might well be centred around livestock trading, these are likely also part of an interdependent state, regional or global economic networks and quite possibly part of the extensive trade networks from which the UK benefits. What is key here is the representation of the UK as a developed and more sophisticated trading nation, in comparison to vaguely drawn others.

Rather than overtly stated, the construction of identity for the British Armed forces is found in the interrelationships between the constructions of identity and the function and practices described. The identity is constructed as masculine not simply through the overt references within the text but also through a range of associations between different aspects. In particular we see it in the hierarchical relationships implied in the distinction between the active and passive subjects – the military actors as specialists, and the passive human terrain which is studied. The active / military and passive / civilian, evokes masculine/feminine gendered dynamic (see Cohn, Hill and Ruddick 2005).

The primacy of Information, Intelligence and Influence as the main function of cultural capacity, and the prominent linkage to operational success and even offensive action, serves to situate culture within a military framework. This is situated against two Others – the 'Adversary' or the 'Human Terrain'. Both are described as targets – adversaries for capture or kill (2-4) or as target audiences for influence (2-5). In both cases, the British Armed forces are in control. Table 6 lists a number of phrases and words in the texts, each of which are associated with the UK Armed Forces or the other side.

Table 6 Showing conceptual associations in *Culture and The Human Terrain* (2013). Those terms in *italics* are implied by oppositional relationships.

Terms associated with the British Armed Forces	Terms associated with Others
Military	Human Terrain
Informed	Hospitable
Knowing (2-6, 2-7)	Knowable
Understanding	Understandable
Developed	Complex (3-6)
Western	Local
British	Population
Expert	Target
Capable	Mappable
Systematic	Winnable
Influential	Influenced
Win	Potentially dissatisfied / disadvantaged
Technical	Tribal
Centralised	Having sensitivities

CONCLUSION

The quote that opened this chapter highlighted a concern that cultural understanding wasn't 'being done well enough' by the British Armed Forces. *Culture and the Human Terrain* tries to outline how culture can be 'done' and to make the case for the necessity and relevance of improved understanding of culture in a military context. In doing so, it tries to reconcile how do you 'do' cultural understanding -with the self-reflection, empathy, gender awareness, relationship-building, language learning and an understanding of social, political and economic organisation that it argues is necessary - within the structures of a military institution. These skills usually understood within the civilian sphere are translated into a military context. It is perhaps unsurprising that the resulting document reveals tensions in the construction of identity. These non-combative, civilian, practices disrupt an easy correspondence between different aspects of identity - what we do, how we do it, and who we are, tell different and at times conflicting stories.

That both the UK and UK Armed forces have a (shared) culture, as well as the 'others' that are the targets of cultural understanding, is repeated throughout the text. However, rather than implying a parity between self and other cultures, rather it is used to construct the military audience as active users of culture able to analyse both their own and others cultures objectively.

Within the doctrine we see a strong focus, not on the humanistic elements of improving cultural understanding, but rather on elements instrumental to other military functions – kinetic, intelligence and information activities. Further, the development of cultural capacities and expertise is framed within a technical 'rationalised' approach to understanding the tools, models and frameworks by necessity capture fixed moments of culture. Culture is an attribute here, and something that can be mapped, understood and mastered. The document is making a case for culture and links the intangible and destabilising elements of culture into this technical–rational framework. This framing is not 'gender-neutral' but rather draws on the wider gendered constructions of rationality, objectivity and scientific mastery. There is a wealth of feminist work which has demonstrated that the western model of a rational, objective actor imagined is masculine and that this is embedded in a relation to an emotional, subjective feminine, which is devalued (Peterson 1992, Jones 2004; Barker 2000; Hooper 1998; Tickner 1992, 2001:33) We also see this gendered dynamic within the imperial relations of western rationality positioned against a feminised eastern, primitive, or undeveloped irrational other (Said, 1978; McClintock, 1995; Agathangelou and Ling, 2004). In the doctrine, this rational-masculine understanding of culture, is linked to particular military functions -to offensive action and intelligence and information activities which suggest relationships of dominance and control over the 'other'. Simultaneously the relationship building, self-reflection and empathy associated with subjectivity and emotionality are downplayed within the text.

Cultural understanding is essential to military practice, but there is a tension on how to ‘do cultural understanding better’ which rest in how culture itself can be understood – either as a stable, observable and mappable fact which can be captured by systematic frameworks of rational ‘man’²⁶, or if culture is dynamic and multiple, subject to change also apparent within the doctrine. Culture is present in both forms within the doctrine, although more space is devoted to the former. Understanding culture as dynamic means rather than a set of facts to be studied, cultural understanding becomes an ongoing relational practice of *continual* self-reflection and empathic relationships. The latter, as we saw, poses a potential risk within a military context where comradeship and nationalism on the one hand and de-humanisation and distancing on the other, are common practices to enable the use of violent and lethal force.

The text expressed the sentiment of engaging ‘cultural thinking in all we do’ (ii) but at the same time, limits the level or type of cultural understanding understood as desirable or possible for different personnel. Whilst in part a reflection of the time and resources that must be committed to the building of these skills, it may also reflect the potential disruptive influence they might bring. Rather than the practices of cultural capability discussed above being the answer to ‘how we do culture’ instead it becomes a question of commanders and decision-makers adequately using other sources of expertise. It is recognised that most military personnel and decision-makers will not have the deeper levels of ‘cultural understanding’ themselves. A considerable portion of the doctrine is concerned with decision-makers taking input from experts or specialists, able to have a deeper handle on the dynamics at play. These include military cultural specialists but also civilians: academics, civil servants, and expatriates (2-3 and 3-1 to 3-3). These experts can then provide the advice required for those in decision making positions and command roles to consider them in actions. Rather than embodying cultural understanding, they become users of expertise, a role which sits easier with the technocratic, rational construction of identity which emerges.

Rather than ‘cultural thinking in all we do’ the British Armed Forces can use the more sophisticated aspects of cultural insight developed from the prolonged relationship-building, cultural emersion and self-awareness but it can be contained, accessed from a more detached and objective position and does not impact personnel tasked for other kinds of work. Similarly in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* explored in the following chapter mentoring is suggested to be specific to certain roles and personalities.

There is a common rhetoric of cultural understanding as an essential part of counterinsurgency and stabilisation campaigns, one which emphasises its role in state-building and in facilitating the multiple relationships which such a project demands. The role of self-reflection, empathy, and sophisticated

²⁶ This is a reference to an ideal of ‘rational man’ as a gendered construct, not intended as a reflection of a relationship between sexed body and rationality.

grasp of social structures is seen as central in these operations. However, we see in feminist work on the military -particularly in reference to peacekeeping operations which use similar skills- that these practices are routinely devalued (Duncanson 2009, Razack 2004). They are devalued along two interconnected lines: that they aren't sufficiently masculine, and that they aren't sufficiently military. The military discourse around the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan was one of relief that it was a 'proper' or 'real' war (Duncanson 2013:77; Duncanson and Cornish 2012:154-156)

As Duncanson (2009) saw in relation to peacekeeping, combat-soldiers recoded many previously feminized skills as masculine constructing a model of a 'peacekeeping masculinity'. I argue here that a similar dynamic is at play within the doctrine, where the practices associated with 'doing culture' are constructed as masculine, through the invocation of rationality, objectivity and technocratic mastery. Due to the mutually definitive links between masculinity, the war and military (Hutchings 2008a), this framing also serves to bolster the construction of 'cultural understanding' as a professional military practice.

CHAPTER 6. PARTNERING INDIGENOUS FORCES

We will not give up this strategy of mentoring. It is what distinguishes a liberating army from an army of occupation. (Gordon Brown 2009)

Every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort. And, sadder still, there always is a chorus of willing intellectuals to say calming words about benign or altruistic empires, as if one shouldn't trust the evidence of one's eyes watching the destruction and the misery and death brought by the latest mission civilizatrice (Said 2003:xvi)

INTRODUCTION

The campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan engaged 'kinetic' military activity: outright combat and the targeting of armed adversaries. At the same time however, they also engaged a range of non-combat skills and practices and these include those grouped as 'partnering'. The British Armed forces were engaged in training and mentoring Iraqi and Afghan security forces; at various times commanding and operating with or alongside them. As with the increased cultural capacity in the previous chapter, this work too demanded different skills from combat operations and it became an imperative for the British Armed Forces to grow and develop expertise in this area. These non-combat, more commonly civilian practices, particularly those which stress collaboration, teaching, communication and developing relationships, again became situated within a military context and must be constructed within a framework of conflict and the warfighting ethos dominant in *British Defence Doctrine*. These dynamics are explored in this chapter.

This chapter looks at the doctrine note *JDN6-11 Partnering Indigenous Forces* (from now on *Partnering Indigenous Forces*) which was published to cover the practices of training and mentoring 'indigenous' security forces by the British Armed Forces, which came to prominence in Iraq and Afghanistan. The first part of the chapter provides a brief context for those practices, tracing the move from conventional warfare to population-centred counterinsurgency and state-building in Iraq and Afghanistan. It aims to chart the way these activities became part of the shift in understanding of the wars and the strategy of population-centred counterinsurgency approach.

The second part introduces and analyses the doctrine itself. Emergent from idealised historic British military campaigns it analyses the construction of British military identity in relation to the non-combat practices of partnering. It shows the depiction of Indigenous forces as resting on ideas of racialized cultural difference and orientalist tropes and highlights the reliance on colonial histories to inform current practice. Rather than combat centred masculinity this chapter argues that a paternalistic model of masculinity is deployed, which situates the partnering of 'indigenous' forces as part of a duty, as narrower arguments about British interests give way to broad ideals of development

and progress. The linkage of partnering and this imperial masculine responsibility supports the situating of partnering as an appropriately military endeavour, despite the involvement of commonly civilian activities.

6.1 TRAINING, MENTORING & PARTNERING SECURITY FORCES IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

This section gives the broad context in which the publication developed and the operational environment it speaks to. It gives a brief history of training, mentoring and partnering activities in Iraq and Afghanistan before exploring the various roles that these practices have taken on: exit strategy, home casualty minimisations, legitimacy and economic opportunity.

Partnering Indigenous Forces was released in 2011, following circulation for a year as a discussion paper. The timing of the release, the content focus on ‘intervention’ contexts and the use of Iraq and Afghanistan as examples of practice, position it as a response to these conflicts. The British operations in Iraq ran as OP-TELEC (2003–2009) and the UK Armed Forces also contributed personnel to the NATO Training Mission Iraq (2004–11) with forces returning in 2014 in OP SHADER against Islamic State (aka ISIS/ISIL/Daesh). In Afghanistan, British operations ran as OP HERRICK (2002–2014) which included contributions to NATO’s ISAF mission. ISAF ended 01 Jan 2015 to be reborn as NATO’s Resolute Support Mission (RSM) to which the UK currently contributes approximately 470 troops (NATO 2015).

Britain has a history of training and mentoring local forces which predates these campaigns. Under British imperial rule, local troops were raised to maintain control and in the bitter counterinsurgency operations which characterised the retreat from empire (see Corum 2006, Land Warfare Centre 2010). More recently, the training of other nations’ military forces is a practice of ‘defence diplomacy’ and security sector reform (SSR) efforts in peace support and stabilisation operations. Working with local troops appears recurrent in British military practices overseas and correspondingly appears in the formal doctrine and informal interpretations of that practice. Often, partnering activities have been classified as Activities other Than War (AOTW) or as part of Low Intensity Conflict, including counterinsurgency war.

Despite the frequent referencing of British counterinsurgency practice in US and wider Western military circles, Britain struggled to adapt to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq, in Basra and MND (SE) the security situation worsened and the British struggled to maintain control in the context of fragmented state power (Rangwala 2012). The British ended OP-TELEC in 2009, ostensibly handing over control to the newly trained Iraqi forces and US command. The UK personnel that remained were trainers as part of NTM-I, predominantly training the new Iraqi naval force based at the deep water port of Umm Qasr in the South. New doctrine publications emerged as the British left Iraq and refocused on the more ‘popular’ war in Afghanistan. *Security and*

Stabilisation the Military Contribution was published in November 2009 and a new addition of *Army Doctrine Publication Countering Insurgency* was published in 2010.

In both of these documents the role of training and mentoring becomes more prominent. The practice of training and mentoring local forces is even briefly mentioned for the first time in the capstone publication *British Defence Doctrine* in its third edition published in 2008, characterised as part of Activities other Than War (AOTW). In contrast *Countering Insurgency* (MoD 2010f) opens with the assertion is that “COIN is Warfare” and no longer to be considered synonymous with AOTW or low intensity operations (1-1). At the same time the role of training teams is prominent in the doctrine, Embedded Training Teams (ETT) are mentioned on the second page, where it is argued that:

Training the host nation’s security forces and partnering and mentoring them on operations is an essential part of achieving long-term security which the host nation can sustain. Those selected to train host nation security forces themselves require to be trained in cultural awareness and theatre specifics so that they can fit in with their charges from the outset. (MoD 2010f: 2-2)

Training and mentoring or ‘partnering’ activities are thus at times classified as ‘Activities Other Than War’ and at others a key part of counterinsurgency understood as war. Where these activities are positioned is important, as it confers status in a military which emphasises war as its primary function, and valorises a “Warfighting Ethos”.

In Iraq and Afghanistan the development of the security forces took on an important role as central to the exit strategy of both countries. In announcing the surge in 2007 President Bush articulated this as central to the mission:

Our troops will have a well-defined mission: To help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing the security that Baghdad needs. (Bush 2007)

The competency of the Iraqi security forces became central to the exit strategy; the idea of defeating the insurgency itself is conspicuously absent. For the British too, there was a political focus on training and mentoring, with ministerial visits, news articles and briefings about the role (For example MoD 2007, 2009, 2010). The development of the Iraqi , and later Afghan security allows the withdrawal of Coalition forces before the full suppression of insurgent activity, rather requiring the transference of the battle to the newly trained militaries.

It is clear that throughout the period of engagement with Iraq and Afghanistan there were a number of reasons for the strategy – using local forces acts as a ‘force multiplier’ increasing the available troops for the overstretched occupation and also reducing ‘home’ casualties. A key political imperative for the coalition forces, as one MoD News report on a General’s speech explains:

His message was essentially one of good news. ISAF was stepping back from the combat role that it had had in the early days and was increasingly mentoring and advising the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) who were successfully taking over that responsibility. As a result of disengaging from the combat role, ISAF was suffering between 38 and 40 per cent fewer casualties when compared to last year's figures. (MoD 2012b)

The political focus also came to look on training and mentoring as a means of legitimising the British efforts against the insurgency. As Prime Minister Gordon Brown put it in 2009, quoted at the beginning of the chapter and later repeated word for word by the defence secretary, the strategy of mentoring became what distinguishes between liberation and occupation; an important message when the legitimacy of the wars was questionable. A key facet of counterinsurgency is the 'winning' of the local population. Joint operations with local forces are seen as providing a local visage to the occupying forces and the promise of power transfer and the end of 'foreign' control.

Related to this, establishing close military relationships is also a means to support British economic interests, potentially facilitating defence industry contracts with British military suppliers. As *British Defence Doctrine* notes, "the placing of military equipment contracts or the reform of indigenous military structures in a foreign country may foster other positive economic outcomes abroad" (BDD 2011: 1-7).

It is against this backdrop that *Partnering Indigenous Forces* is initially developed as Defence Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) Discussion Paper and circulated first for a year with the NATO Training Mission in Iraq, gathering feedback which fed into the *Partnering Indigenous Forces* studied below.

6.2 PARTNERING INDIGENOUS FORCES

This part of the chapter turns to the doctrine publication *Partnering Indigenous Forces*. This is the first publication in the joint doctrine hierarchy to cover the relationship between the UK Armed Forces and the security forces of nations in which the UK has intervened. This section offers a description of the text, to foreground the following analysis which will draw out the meaning, implications and tensions which arise.

Partnering Indigenous Forces is a substantial document compared to many other Joint Doctrine Notes and is intended as a prelude to a fully authorised doctrine on the subject (JDN6-11)²⁷. *Partnering Indigenous Forces* as a Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) is less comprehensively authored than full Joint Doctrine Publications, and this is evident from the quality of the text. Not only are there some typographical errors, the content is less consistent; at times contradictory and repetitive. It is a lengthy

²⁷ This reflects the move to use the JDN in the function previously described in the doctrine hierarchy as an Interim Joint Doctrine/Warfare Publication (IJDP / IJWP).

147 page document, about twice as long as *Culture and the Human Terrain*, and *Understanding*. It has a 2 part structure. Part 1 (Chapters 1-3) documents conceptual ideas of partnering in current British military doctrinal thinking. Part 2 (Chapters 4-5) looks to apply these ideas and provide practical “lessons, maxims and guidelines” which draw from historical examples. This follows the usual structure of doctrine, which starts with the general and moves to the particular. Throughout the document the main text is supplemented with four illustrative case studies, and an ‘annex’ which offer ‘empirical’ support.

Part One

The first chapter of the document puts the role of “partnering” into a wider understanding of international relations, or as the document describes the “strategic context”. It defines partnering and partnerships, and introducing the different contexts in which these occur: aspiring members of NATO, post-conflict settings, interventions or treaty obligations. It also outlines the actors engaged in partnerships or partnering activities. Partnerships and Partnering are introduced as primarily political activity, a theme returned to later. The focus is on strategic level understanding, rather than on practice.

The second chapter turns to the specific scenario of partnering in intervention and stabilisation contexts. It draws on doctrine *Security and Stabilisation* (2009) to define stabilisation and stability, providing definitions of fragile and failing states, contrasted to the UK as “a stable state with a powerful democracy”(2-1). It also draws the link between partnering and ‘security transitions’, referencing the joint doctrine note *Security Transitions* (2010) heavily. It justifies assistance to fragile/failing states, linked to national and international economic interests and provides contexts for intervention, again strongly linked to national interest. It moves into a more pragmatic look at partnering, listing points to consider in developing partnering strategies and provides a simple boxed ‘strategic framework’ which consists: Understanding, Objectives, Resources and Credibility, Energy and Strategic Communication and Timing. One section covers “understanding the host nation’s journey” and attempts a more reflective look at partnering, drawing on ideas of strategic narrative.

Chapter three turns to the military contribution to “partnering”, with a more focussed engagement on the practices associated with partnering. It is more substantive than the previous two chapters at nearly 40 pages. The chapter employs a model drawn from a US doctrine “The US Security Force Assistance (SFA) Field Manual (FM 3-07), which emphasises 5 Phases of Security Force Assistance “plan and resource, generate, employ, transition and sustain.” The chapter is divided into six sections based on this model:

Section I Understand
Section II Plan
Section III Resources
Section IV Generate
Section V Employ and Transition
Section VI Sustain.

The 5 phases are altered with the addition of a pre-condition of understanding, the separation of planning and resourcing, and grouping together employ and transition. The section stresses the need to understand the context of partnering the 'human terrain'. It introduces the concept of MAST – Mentoring, Advising, Support, and Training and offering definitions of each activity and the differences between embedding and integrating with local forces.

This chapter is followed by two case studies and a third case study in an 'annex'. The first case study is NATO Training Mission – Iraq (NTM-I). It is brief, a little over a page and largely descriptive with a positive tone. It is heralded as “an excellent example of focused MAST, enabling the development of a key Iraqi military capability“(JDN6/11 2011:3A-2). The second case study looking at US Embedded Training Teams in Kandahar and Helmand in 2004/5 is much longer and more critical. It is a cautionary tale of “the problems caused by being under-resourced” (JDN 6/11 2011:3A-2). The case study in the Annex “Mentoring and Advising at Ministerial Level: the Creation of the Afghan National Police Strategy” is again more positive. It focuses on the role of mentoring to produce a high level strategic document. It details military support to the civilian police and political staff responsible for producing that document.

Part Two

The second part shifts focus and looks to draw applied lessons from previous experience. It is framed with a title page including the quote:

Understand why things are done the way they are. Although some local practices may seem strange, they generally have good reasons behind them. (4-1)

This is positioned on a full page black and white picture, showing a young white male British officer standing over a line of seated black uniformed men. Whilst not attributed here, the quote is later repeated as a maxim and attributed to the US Security Force Assistance Field manual. The picture is also not referenced; however it shows members of 4th Battalion, The King's African Rifles, on a route march near Gilgil in the Rift Valley, Kenya, during the Mau Mau uprising against British colonial rule²⁸ (NAM c1956)

Chapter 4 aims to provide “practical lessons and guidelines from the British historical experience” (4-1). It draws largely from the post-1945 experience and decolonization, which is justified as prior to 1945, the “the British were the legitimate power in their colonies” (4-2). A list of indigenous forces is provided and lessons are drawn predominantly from Malaya, Oman and Cyprus. Emphasis is put on the need for 'Understanding' drawing on the concepts outlined in *Understanding* (2010). The focus is on cultural understanding, devoting space to the role of intelligence and influence operations.

²⁸ It is an archived image identified through the National Army Museum.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) is superficially engaged with as a means to understand the 'indigenous' forces. Descriptions of 'indigenous' forces' particularities are used as examples, such as a lengthy description of "Pukhtanwali" honour code in Helmand. The skills needed for working with 'indigenous' forces are explored and a model of "Two Faces of Mentoring and Advising" model is introduced, categorising desirable and undesirable characteristics in mentors or advisers.

Chapter 4 is supplemented by a detailed annex which looks at early British experience with the Indian Army and the Gurkhas. This is structured into seven lessons, which give "a historical note" and then translate this into a lesson for modern practice. The lessons are:

- Lesson 1 – Officer/Mentor and Advisor Induction
- Lesson 2 – Developing an Informal Information Network
- Lesson 3 – Develop a Human Terrain Map of Your Unit
- Lesson 4 – Language Ability
- Lesson 5 – Continuity
- Lesson 6 – Developing and Nurturing Officers/NCOs
- Lesson 7 – Host Nation Operational Induction

Chapter 5 as the concluding chapter of the doctrine distils down the previous chapters into a selection of maxims and guidelines on 27 topics listed in Figure 9. That there are 27 maxims echoes T.E. Lawrence's *Twenty-Seven Articles* (1917). The doctrine warns that the guidelines are at times contradictory. The majority of the maxims are quotes taken from military historians and writers, with some reference to US Doctrine. T.E. Lawrence's *Twenty-Seven Articles* (1917) is the most prevalent, quoted 8 times, followed by the US Field Manual *Security Force Assistance* (2009) quoted 5 times. Cartwright (2009) and Browne (2009) are each cited 3 times from their respective articles in the British Army Review.

Maxim Topics

On Study
On Them Versus Us
On Language and Culture
On Local Habits
On the Local Character
On Being British
On Selecting the Right People
On Culture Shock
On the Prominence of Advisers
On the Relationship between
Advisor and Advisee
On When to Intervene
On Perspective
On Walking before you Run
On the Look of Local Forces
On Human Intelligence
On Intelligence
On Security
On Generalisation
On Thanks
On Handing Over
On Small Talk
On Wit and Humour
On Local Leaders
On Rank
On interpreters
On Local Helpers
On the Police

The chapter includes a boxed excerpt taken from a correspondence between a US Commander in the field to the area Commander in Chief (CiC) in Vietnam covering Mentoring and Advising and a short commentary. The chapter concludes with a sizable boxed extract from Patrick Porters *Military Orientalism* (2009) which offers a warning of the dangers of cultural essentialism.

Figure 9. List of Maxim topics in Chapter 5

Images

The document contains only 13 photographic images. All bar one (picturing fighter jets) are images of people. Of the 12 pictures of people, seven show white British military personnel with 'indigenous'

people and in 11 of the 12 men only are pictured. Eight of the 12 depicted uniformed 'indigenous' people. Four had images of non-uniformed 'indigenous' people. There is one image of a white, female soldier who makes a sympathetic face, and is touches the shoulder of a woman in hijab with her back to the camera. None of the pictures depict any black or Asian members of the regular British armed forces. One picture shows a man of colour, dressed in British military issue clothes, however this is not full uniform and his hair length and beard mark him as civilian, likely to be an interpreter from the context²⁹. Two pictures show children. Pictures rarely have overt captions or references in text, but were mostly used illustratively. The most common depiction is of a group of indigenous troops with a single member of British Armed Forces. Several pictures were archive pictures of indigenous forces, including from Oman, Malaysia, Kenya, Nepal and Indian provinces. The overall structure of the text is summarised in Figure 10.

Preface
Part 1: Partnership and Partnering in Context
Chapter 1: Partnerships and Partnering in Context
Chapter 2: Partnering, Intervention, Stabilisation and Stability
Case Study 1: The US Approach in Iraq 2008-2011 “Developing a Strategic Partnership”
Chapter 3: The Military Contribution to Partnering
Case Study 2: Royal Navy Training Mission Iraqi 2003-2008
Case Study 3: US Embedded Training Teams in Kandahar and Helmand 2004/5
Case Study 4: Mentoring and Advising at Ministerial Level: the Creation of the Afghan National Police Strategy
Part 2: Partnering, Intervention, Stabilisation and Stability
Chapter 4: Training and Operating with Indigenous Forces: Lessons from History
Annex: “The Indian Army and the Gurkhas”.
Chapter 5: Maxims and Guidelines for Military Partnering
The doctrine ends with a substantive quote from Patrick Porter's <i>Military Orientalism</i> (2009).

Figure 10. Structure of *Partnering Indigenous Forces*

²⁹ This is not conclusive, beards and uncut hair are permitted for faith reasons in the British Armed Forces, but this length, style, and casual dress looks unusual.

6.3 PURPOSE, PRACTICE, IDENTITY: THE THREE QUESTIONS

The following section uses the ‘three questions’ framework to analyse *Partnering Indigenous Forces*. It uses the questions “What do we do? How do we do it? and Who are we?” to trace the interweaving narratives of purpose, practice and identity which are constructed in the doctrine note. These questions serve to structure the analysis, and bring into focus the role of daily practice, and its understanding in the construction of identity and simultaneously the impact of identity in framing practices and what purpose they serve. The elements are interrelated – whether mutually reinforcing or contradictory and the approach maps these links and their broader contexts.

WHAT WE DO WHEN WE DO PARTNERING?

The narrative of what partnering activities are for within *Partnering Indigenous Forces* follows two strands. The first ties the purpose of partnering clearly to supporting the national interest and to a lesser extent furthering international security. Far more prominence is given throughout the text to the notion of progress and development for the partnered nation, which both filters into national interest but also has a clear theme of altruism.

National Interest and International Security

One of the themes prevalent in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* is situating Partnering within the context of national interest. The following two quotes exemplify this framing, which strongly echoes that in *British Defence Doctrine* and discussed in Chapter 4 (on page 68).

The important factor is that engagement is necessary because not to do so will either impact on our own national interest in the short-term, we are obligated by treaty to assist, or we have identified that a long-term partnership will be in our national interest in the future. (JDN6/11 2011:1-6)

It may be in our national interest to assist a fragile or failing state to achieve stability. This may be by invitation, or the UN may decide that we need to do so using force against the will of the host nation. (JDN6/11 2011:2-2)

This theme occurs in the initial two chapters of the doctrine note, in the first part of the doctrine, which is concerned with the conceptual basis of partnering. The first chapter of the doctrine puts the role of Partnering into a wider understanding of international relations, or as the document describes the “strategic context”. The second chapter looks at the context of interventions and stabilisation operations. In the second chapter, the criteria for evaluating whether or not to engage in an intervention all reference the national interest. In the list of considerations before an intervention the first is “Is it in our National interests?” (Quoted from JDP 3-40, on 2-4). The primacy of protecting the national interest is also highlighted in the following quote:

There are many reasons that may compel us to intervene: it may be because of a crisis in another nation that affects us in some way; there may be a legal obligation to support a long-standing strategic partner or ally; there may be a moral imperative such as preventing genocide; or there may be historic ties between us and the host nation. The baseline is normally whether or not intervention is in our national interest. (JDN6/11 2011:2-3)

Whilst other rationales for interventions are mentioned, the national interest is the ‘baseline’ underpinning other concerns. However the appeal to national interest is questioned within the document in a footnote which startlingly recognises that the “term is open to interpretation therefore almost anything can be justified as being in our national interest” and thus advises careful understanding for strategic planners (2-3). Elsewhere the national interest is more clearly defined, with a boxed extract taken from the UK Government’s Building Stability Overseas Strategy (2011) which lays out why stabilisation activities which prevent conflict are in the British national economic interests in terms of trade, economic productivity and constraining piracy (JDN6/11 2011:2-3). This primary focus aligns the national interest with commercial endeavours overseas, and significantly to the role of international security. Enabling local forces to secure their borders and maintain both internal and external security is also seen in terms of preventing the leakage of conflict and insecurity to their neighbours and the international system.

Progress and Development

The concern with the national interest is limited to the first two chapters. More prominently throughout the doctrine note is a commitment to the development of the ‘indigenous’ nation. Significant and repeated throughout the doctrine is a story of helping, assisting, facilitating, supporting or guiding the indigenous nation to progress to a certain level, similar to that of the UK. This progression is related to ideas of national interest and international security, as the aspirant level expressed as a base line is for the indigenous state able to monopolise violence, and maintain its own internal security and at least a proportion of its external security (JDN6/11 2011:1-4, 2-14). However, the narrative is infused with wider ideas about progress, and reform for the sake of the indigenous nation as is shown in this quote:

As mentioned considerably in this Joint Doctrine Note (JDN), it is the development of indigenous forces to the level that they are capable of taking ownership of their own security that is essential to building enduring peace *for the nation concerned*. (4-4 emphasis mine)

This narrative of aiding progression or development for the nation concerned is framed as a positive story, evoking ideas of altruism rather than British national interest. This expressed commitment to a greater good beyond the limited idea of national security is more prevalent than concern for national interest and also interestingly positioned as a compatible aim.

True strategic partnerships are seen as a political decision, a relationship formalised through an alliance or treaty, and must have a sound legal basis to underpin them (1-9, 1-3). Developing a true

strategic partnership is not a guaranteed outcome of partnering (1-9). The doctrine notes that Britain only developed 4 'true partnerships' in the 17 post WW2 counterinsurgency campaigns, with Malaysia, Kenya, Brunei and Oman (4-4). The hope of a true partnership can function as an incentive or reward for a 'host' nation (1-5) and the underlying theme is that true partnerships are dependent on pre-set conditions being met (1-3, 1-7, 1-9). These conditions establish a level of development, as true partnerships can occur only with nations that are "self-reliant for their own internal security, governance and economy" (1-4). This must also involve all aspects of society in the host nation (2-7). The beginnings of this true partnership is only seen when indigenous leadership has equal knowledge to their mentors and, in a military context, when the indigenous commander is in the lead (3-36).

Partnering is understood as the process where a fully sovereign nation assists a lesser nation to progress to a standard at which point a 'true' partnership of "otherwise independent bodies" built on "a solid foundation of mutual trust and respect." (JDN6/11 2011:1-3). This process is described as a journey having three stages the "initial engagement", "Partnering" and "True Partnership". The Initial engagement covers the decision to engage leading to the establishment of the "host nation" and "sponsor" nation, with the host nation understood as "*a partner in name only*" (1-9 emphasis in original). The second phase is the Partnering, where the host nation becomes a 'partner in spirit':

At this stage the sponsor nation(s) are effectively the dominant partner(s).
The host nation is a partner in spirit but will fall short of being able to
reach the goals and objectives set on its own. (1-9)

In this stage the nation is still deficient according to the standard set, and in need of help or assistance. The third stage is the establishment of a "true strategic partnership" as understood above. This progression is perhaps best articulated by the diagram reproduced as Figure 11 below, taken from *Partnering Indigenous Forces*:

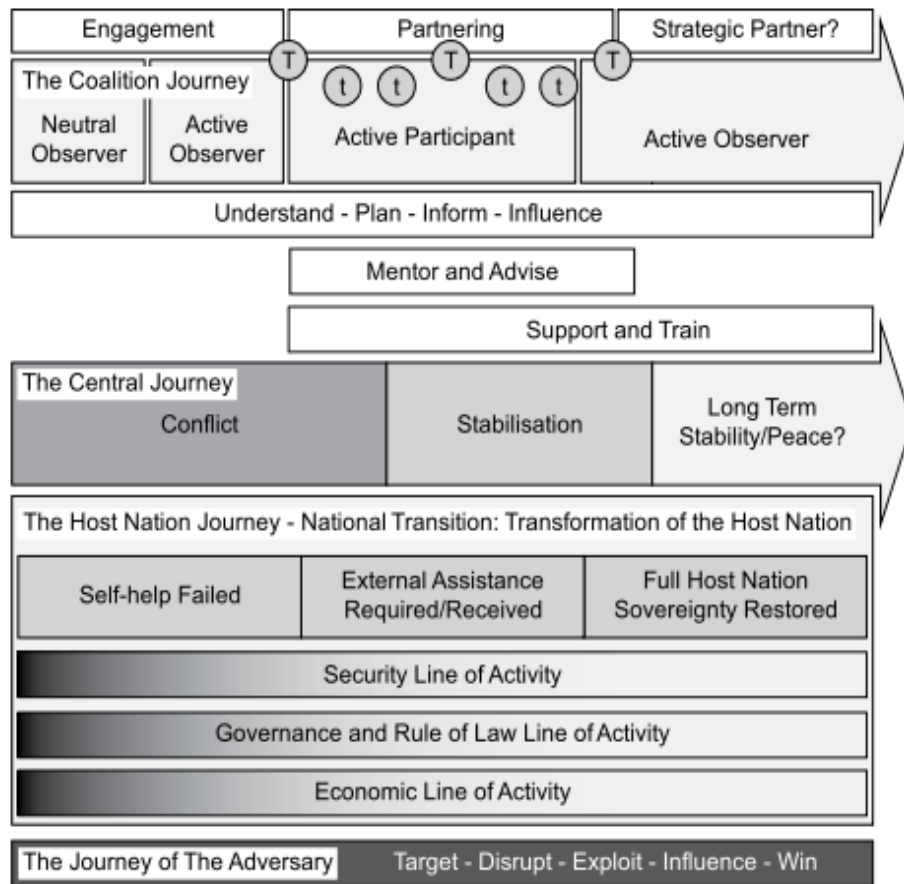


Figure 11. “Big T/ Little t Transitions” (2-27)

The above diagram shows the multi-layered way in which Partnering is imagined as a progressive process, clearly directional on a specific axis indicated by the two large arrows. The upper arrow shows the coalition journey, flanked by the 'engagement to strategic partner' progression above, and the 'understanding to influence' and MAST progressions beneath. The central journey “conflict to peace” is shown with the other arrow, with the latter part of the diagram showing the host nation's 'transformative' journey from failure to restoration, in lines of activity (perhaps less clearly directional without an arrowhead). The somewhat vague adversary journey is also included on this access, but the progression is not highlighted by gradation in tone. Whilst the previous journeys appear to progress left to right in tandem, the positioning of the Adversary's journey is unclear; the implication that the adversary wins, peace is achieved and coalition activity reduces is presumably not intended! The progression of the 'host nation' through the different levels is facilitated by different levels of support from the coalition.

Present in this diagram and clear in the text is also the use of language which evokes 'narrative' strategic theory. There is explicit reference to 'journeys' and different actors having different sometimes conflicting 'journeys'. A subsection of chapter two specifically references the idea of the “Understanding the Journey of the Host Nation (JDN6/11 2011: 2-15) which urges the intervening

actors to 'understand' and in this section an attempt is made to use the idea of different 'journeys' to de-centre "our own perspective" and better consider the intervention from the host nation's 'journey'. This journey is then broken down into multiple strands, as illustrated by the diagram Figure 1 above. The relationship between the two nations articulates the distinct roles they play. The story is one of a sponsoring or intervening nation and a 'host nation', 'aspirant partner' or 'charge'.

Whilst at times there is an attempt to stress some autonomy for the 'host nation', there is also a persistent theme of using influence or soft power to coerce participation from the nation. Partnering becomes a transitive verb, where it is done by the UK to the targeted indigenous forces. Change recognised "is mostly change for the aspirant partner" (JDN6/11 2011:1-6) and as mentioned above the sponsor nation is recognised as dominant partner (JDN6/11 2011:1-9) which is also shown in the two quotes below:

Understand that by partnering we are assisting, or persuading, the host nation to go on the transformational journey (JDN6/11 2011:3-2)

It is important to note that this is not a meeting of equals at this stage. The mentor has the superior military or specialist knowledge which he must impart to his charges. (JDN6/11 2011:3-11)

As one of the maxims in Chapter 5 quoting TE Lawrence shows, there is a level of managing the local forces, and ensuring that they come up with the correct answer to the question you ask of them, which belies the suggestions of autonomy and mutuality in partnership:

Win and keep the confidence of your leader. Strengthen his prestige at your expense before others when you can. Never refuse or quash schemes he may put forward; but ensure that they are put forward in the first instance privately to you. Always approve them, and after praise modify them insensibly, causing the suggestions to come from him, until they are in accord with your own opinion. When you attain this point, hold him to it, keep a tight grip of his ideas, and push them forward as firmly as possibly, but secretly, so that to none but himself (and he not too clearly) is aware of your pressure. (TE Lawrence cited in JDN6/11 2011:5-5)

The quote above draws a direct continuance between the current partnering relationships and the historical British imperialism. There is a direct reference to the imperial narratives of Britain in the 20th century, where colonisation and imperialism were justified by the notion of a superior civilisation, assisting the underdeveloped. As McCarthy(2009:166) eloquently puts it, European dominion over non-Europeans was and is "justified with conceptions of development, enlightenment, civilisation and progress". He argues that these ideas were deployed "to reduce the cognitive dissonance between liberal universalism and liberal imperialism"(2009:166). In the context of this doctrine, they mediate the dissonance between the idea of liberation, which was a feature of the discourse about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the reality of lengthy occupation.

The “Journey” of the host nation is not one chosen by the ‘host nation’ but rather one that follows a specific and pre-ordained progression, imposed by the intervening or ‘assisting’ British (or coalition) force. It is also acknowledged that the process of partnering may not reach the proposed end state:

Partnering is, however, a risky business because it is effectively an exploratory journey with no guaranteed outcome. The relationship may flounder because of mutual incompatibility or the host nation failing to reach the conditions set. (JDN6/11 2011:1-5)

This is part of an image of partnering, as a progressive journey towards an enduring ‘formal partnership’ imagined as contingent on growing levels of ‘trust’, formalisation (e.g. through treaties) and interoperability on military operations. However the desired partnership may not in the end be viable, and the two explanations – mutual incompatibility and host nation failure, obscure the role of the British or host nation dismissal of such a partnership.

The story being told about the role of partnering in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* has two sides. Whilst partnering is understood as part of a programme of activities in the national interest and international security the overwhelming story within the document is one of assisting a nation to ‘progress’ or develop. This is both depicted as part of the national interest but also for the ‘good’ of the host/indigenous nation itself with some altruism. Both of these narratives cement the practice of training and mentoring in the construction of British military identity in different ways. By positioning the practices as part of the national interest it forms part of the overall remit of the military as ‘defender of the nation’ linking it to a clear defence imperative and congruent with the dominant story of *British Defence Doctrine*. The ‘development’ narrative, where the practices are positioned as ‘for the good of the host nation’ itself is potentially more destabilising. Rather than for the British national interest, the military is acting outside the remit of defence and in a humanitarian framing present also in *British Defence Doctrine* as part of a representation of Britain as a moral, responsible, international actor. Here the ‘moral responsible actor’ is taken further, with the direct referencing of British colonial history. This provides a historical precedent for the activity with the development narrative echoing a discourse of civilising mission, and that British military might comes with a responsibility to act, evokes ideas of the ‘white man’s burden’ returned to below.

HOW DO WE DO PARTNERING?

This section looks at the depiction of partnering as practices ‘on the ground’. Partnering is understood to consist of a range of activities, and these are grouped in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* by the acronym MAST – Mentoring, Advising, Support and Training. These are described as the “4 key assistance tools for capacity-building in the security sphere” (JDN6/11 2011:3-10). Mentoring and Advising are similar activities, carried out by the same personnel. These personnel are embedded with their ‘host’ nation counterparts to assist in day-to-day operations, and develop the ‘indigenous forces’ capacity’. Mentors have a more involved role than advisers and are “empowered to take the lead when appropriate” (JDN6/11 2011:3-11). Support is understood in *Partnering Indigenous*

Forces as referring to the “specific provision of resources and niche capabilities that the host nation does not possess” (JDN6/11 2011:3-13) and is not covered in as much details. Training is broadly defined as “to teach a person, or organisation, a skill, or type of behaviour, through regular practise and instruction.” Training practice is covered in more detail, including some references to adaptation of British training methods to the ‘partnering’ context and provision of technical and basic training (JDN6/11 2011: 3-13, 3-29). However the main focus in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* is devoted to the first two practices: Mentoring and Advising. These are seen as very similar roles engaging lone personnel in close relationships with their indigenous ‘charges’. The practices of MAST, in particular mentoring and advising, are portrayed as requiring specific skills sets. *Partnering Indigenous Forces* notes a lack of training for those deploying as mentors or advisers and recommends a focus on three areas: military skills; culture and language; and communication/negotiation skills (4-20). The doctrine note doesn't cover military skills in any detail, except to stress that mentors and advisers must be competent, but the practices associated with the second two are considered at length and will be explored below.

Culture and Language

Cultural and language skills are associated heavily in the text with Understanding. *Partnering Indigenous Forces* draws directly from the development of this concept in other doctrine, most notably in *Security and Stabilisation* (2009) where the concept is introduced and in *Understanding* (2010) where it is fully developed (JDN6/11 2011:3-15, *Understanding* is analysed in the following chapter). The lengthy definition of Understanding below stresses the depth of knowledge, in contrast to more superficial engagement with cultural understanding labelled 'cultural awareness':

Understanding is to gain, and have, an in-depth knowledge that allows you to influence the direction of events significantly. This implies a deeper cultural knowledge and some language skill. This is a skill that cannot be achieved with any real effect without careful study and immersion. Assimilation is total immersion in a culture inasmuch as someone from another culture can be part of a different culture. This implies language fluency and a passion for the culture under study. Few deploying troops will be able to achieve this, but identifying who has the aptitude is critical, as is developing a network of true experts who can be called upon to assist. (JDN6/11 2011:4-11)

Within this quote, there is an emphasis on the necessity and utility of 'understanding'. Both are seen throughout the text with warnings of what would happen without understanding and the necessity of such understanding for success (JDN6/11 2011:3-15, 4-4, 4-10,). Understanding is presented as a desirable state and a means to an end to enable successful partnering. There are frequent references to the importance of understanding the operating environment and particularly to developing cultural understanding. This is perhaps best shown through a boxed except which draws out two long quotes from Akehurst's (1985) account of the British experience in Oman 1965-1975, to illustrate “The Importance of Cultural Awareness and Understanding”. The box arranges the quotes under new headings. The first is titled “The Different Dhofari Logic to the Western Mind” which ascribed

cultural characteristics to the Dhofar people of coastal Oman, and the second section titled “Influence Through Indigenous Cultural Knowledge” which gives an example of how 'cultural knowledge' was used to determine when to pay an unspecified tribe in order to enforce their compliance. Another example, again of Oman, is given as “The Application of Cultural Knowledge” (JDN6/11 2011:4-14). There is emphasis throughout on language skills (examples include: 3-14, 4-10, 4-11, and 4-15). Enhanced cultural understanding is a skill with military functionality, which echoes its depiction in *Culture and the Human Terrain*, analysed in Chapter Five.

Communication/negotiation

Facilitating communication and negotiation are described in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* explicitly. This is best seen in the model of the “Two FACES of mentoring” used to show what skills are necessary for good mentors and advisers. Of the two faces, one face embodies the ideal attributes of the mentor and the other face its antithesis. The boxed excerpt of this is reproduced as Figure 12 below.

The Good and Bad Faces of Mentoring and Advising ³¹			
The character traits of good and bad mentors and advisers both fall under the acronym FACES			
The Good Face: Characteristics that succeed		The Bad Face: Characteristics that fail	
F	Focused, flexible, friendly, faith in others	F	Fixed, finicky
A-	Adaptable, able to deal with others, ambiguity, able to get along	A	Argumentative, absolutist
C	Calm, culturally adept, communicative, credible, courageous	C	Critical, cruel, culturally uninterested
E	Empathetic, enthusiastic, easygoing	E	Exceptionalist, emotionally distant
S	Sympathetic, sense of humour, strong, self-reliant, self-assured	S	Superior, snobbish, sullen, stubborn
This is not a checklist; it is a series of indicators. One is unlikely to find a character that ticks all of the traits in one particular box. More likely, one will find a mix of these characteristics from both. And not one characteristic predominates in a way that can be singled out as the key indicator of likely success. One may be courageous, adaptable and have a sense of humour, but that might not outweigh their argumentative, or superior nature.			

Figure 12. The Good and Bad Faces of Mentoring from *Partnering Indigenous Forces* (2011:4-19)

These are the characteristics seen as likely to enable the military personnel to best be able to deal with cultural immersion and 'retain the ability to exert influence over the host organisation' (4-18). The positive attributes of friendly, adaptable, calm, empathetic and self-assured mentor are contrasted against a fixed, argumentative, critical and emotionally-distant character. This second mentor, *Partnering Indigenous Forces* warns, risks being 'resented by his charges,' or becoming an 'object of scorn, or fun' (4-18). These personality attributes and the skills of communication and negotiation skills are crucial as part of the relationship-building and consequently to partnering.

Relationship-building

In the first chapter of *Partnering Indigenous Forces* the role of relationship-building is central to the new definition of partnering proposed as:

[A]n approach to relationship-building through direct assistance and shared endeavour that creates the right conditions, spirit and capabilities to achieve a formal and enduring strategic partnership.”(JDN6/11 2011:1-4)

Previously the progressive nature of the partnering function was laid out and one of the key axes of progression presented in one of generating and intensifying the partnering relationship. The boxed figure reproduced below as Figure 13 from the *Partnering Indigenous Forces* shows this more clearly, where the process of partnering is seen as a process of relationship-building.

Engagement	Partnering (Relationship-building)	Partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis • National Interests • Legal Obligation • Moral Imperative • Prior Historical Ties • Cost-benefit Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Common Goals and Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Security Sector Reform - Political Reform - Economic Reform - The Development of Self-reliance • Political Accommodation • Developing the Legal Framework for Assistance • Transition to Host Nation Lead for Security • The Perceived Level of Commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Long-term Strategic Goals • Legal Framework • Spirit of Friendship and Cooperation • Common National Interests
Partner in Name	Partner in Spirit	Partner in Deed

Figure 13 The Stages of Partnership Development from (MoD 2011:1-10)

This relationship-building at a state-state level is also echoed in the personal relationships that the partnering military personnel build with their indigenous counterparts or ‘charges’. Here the practice of embedding personnel with a local force emphasises the personal connections, and a specific skill set required:

The mentor has to develop a relationship with the individual, or team, that he is mentoring which must be based on mutual respect and trust. This should then lead to recognition between the 2 parties of the need to reach a common goal and the empowerment, through knowledge and confidence, to achieve it. (JDN6/11 2011: 3-1 see also 3-14)

This quote emphasises building personnel relationships and connections, and connects these to trust and relationships. The idea of mutuality is also seen at the state-level, included in the suggested new definition of partnering which stresses the 'trust and mutual respect' and the mutually beneficial nature of the arrangement (JDN6/11 2011: 1-3, 2A-2).

This section shows the focus on Partnering as achieved through a range of particular skills. Firstly these are the cultural and language skills which later come to be articulated in *Culture and the Human Terrain* and *Understanding*. Secondly there is a strong emphasis on a range of interpersonal skills – explicitly referred to as communication/ negotiation skills in the text. These are further seen in a repeated emphasis on relationship building as a core part of Partnering, both at a strategic, state to state level, and at an inter-personal level. These skills are woven in the text into an idealised role of a mentor – as someone with a very particular skillset to facilitate partnering, a point returned to in the following section.

Doing Gender

Partnering Indigenous Forces in addition to the construction of masculine identity through the representation of indigenous forces, it is also evident in the representation of women in the text. The construction of the British Armed Forces as male can be seen in the predominant use of male pronouns³⁰. The doctrine uses writing conventions which don't assume a male actor: 'he/she' and 'servicemen and women' are used four times in the text. The inconsistency might reflect different authorship, but serves in the text to highlight that military actors are generally referred to with the masculine. However their position as men is otherwise unmarked, positioning this as the norm. Whilst the term 'men' is only used as a collective noun for the rank and file, 'women' are explicitly referenced within the text. A section entitled 'Women and Operations' (3-22) is quoted in full below:

Women and Operations. Experience of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq has shown the British military the advantages gained by employing female soldiers, police and translators in highly gender-segregated societies. Where actions conducted by a male soldier may lead to irretrievable offence, those same actions by females are acceptable, and even highly beneficial. As David Kilcullen noted 'in traditional societies, women are hugely influential in forming the social networks that insurgents use for support. Co-opting neutral or friendly women, through targeted social and economic programs, builds networks of enlightened self-interest that eventually undermine the insurgents.' Similarly, the training of women in highly traditional, or gender-segregated societies, will likely be a point of friction, perhaps even open discontent with the indigenous population or leadership. The clear operational (and perhaps even moral) necessity to recruit, train and deploy female indigenous police, and military personnel, will thus have

³⁰ He (42 times in the text) and his (49 references), Female pronouns are only used alone referring to non-human entities.

to be carefully managed against domestic social factors which may pin such actions as antagonistic to their way of life” (JDN6/11 2011:3-23)

This section stresses the utilitarian advantage of employing women particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq, both categorised similarly as “highly gender-segregated” societies, arguing simply the avoidance of offense. The quote from David Killcullen’s influential ‘28 articles’ (2006) is a more sophisticated argument which goes beyond avoiding offense, to argue women ‘in traditional societies’ are influential. The doctrine note then appears to ignore this quote, and return to the previous point, inverting the offense argument by suggesting that training women may be problematic. It is however particularly interesting that female indigenous police and military personnel are seen as an operational necessity, even if it seems uncertain about the question of morality. Tradition is conflated with gender-segregation, and the role of women is relegated to the ‘domestic social’ rather than a political concern. The intersection here of gender and traditional societies, conversely positions the British military and society as modern, playing into the dichotomous construction of progressive gender roles and modernity. As has been clearly pointed out, situations of insecurity and militarisation impact on gender relations which are not fixed but rather contemporary, responsive phenomena (Al-Ali and Pratt 2009).

The remaining references to women in the text are more reductive, but continue the idea of women as a cultural marker, a point where difference can be located (Kandiyoti 2007, Al-Ali and Pratt 2009:5-11). As such attitudes to women operate to draw a distinction between the British identity and the indigenous Other. The idea that attitudes to women are part of the ‘cultural difference’ to be negotiated is seen in the remaining references to women – which are part of brief summations of Pakhtun reasons for blood feuds “Zan, Zar, Zamin (women, gold and land)” (JDN6/11 2011:4-13) and Ghurka soldiers phrase “5Ps” of which the last ‘p’ refers to women (the others are family, regiment, money, food). One instance invokes a nexus of class, race, gender and sexuality when it is suggested that “Private Tommy Atkins habits and attitudes towards drink, women (including pornography), homosexual practices, home comforts...” pose a potential difficulty for cultural harmony (JDN6/11 2011:4-20). Tommy Atkins, the figure of the quintessential enlisted man is juxtaposed against an unspecified indigenous other who may take offence from his ‘habits and attitudes’. The presumption of his hard drinking, presumably sexist attitudes, pornographic consumption, and homophobia is juxtaposed against an idea of another who doesn’t drink, consume pornography, and engages in homosexual activity.

The final mention of women is in a maxim on small talk taken from TE Lawrence who advises mentors to “avoid too free talk about women. It is as difficult a subject as religion, and their standards are so unlike our own” as you may cause offence (5-9). The above quote, which isn’t adapted (as they are in other instances), clearly imagines the reader, and military personnel to be enacting the maxim as male, and again uses gender to draw a line of cultural difference embedded in a notion of hierarchy implied by ‘standards’. In a paragraph on “Socio-Cultural Mores” the subject of

women is again raised. This paragraph comes under a heading of ‘Societal Challenges to Training’ including paragraphs on Education, Ethos, Caste, Ethnicity, and Drug Use. The explanatory paragraph at the beginning argues:

Many of the characteristics described below may prove wrong, but the debate about moral, and cultural, equivalency is not one to be raised here. Right or wrong, these are deeply, rooted factors in some societies, and conscious decisions will have to be made to either: change them; accommodate them; or ignore them [...]

Socio-Cultural Mores. Treatment of women, views on sex and propriety, different views on social relations between age groups, ect., are all complex issues within the cultural terrain which may need to be accounted for. These issues can be especially difficult ones to communicate to domestic audiences, who may be shocked at the way women are treated in some societies, and why the British may willingly conform to (or ignore) these domestic imperatives. A key example is the training of female police officers and military personnel in Afghanistan (2011:3-34)

As previously, this quote positions the treatment of women as ‘domestic’ and ‘socio-cultural’ rather than political. However here it suggests that conformity and ignoring them is a likely option, rather than referencing the potential operational benefits. It is unclear what is meant by ‘a key example’. Whether this refers to specific problems encountered, a specific project or otherwise.

There is a clear attempt within the doctrine to engage gender, understood largely as women. The general positioning of the doctrine is one situated in an idea of a masculine norm, supported by the single photograph depicting a woman. Gendered differences are a problem to be negotiated, and where women are explicitly referenced, they are linked to ideas of cultural difference, seen as cultural signifiers. They serve to draw a distinction between a modern Britain and a ‘traditional’ Other. It constructs gender relations as part of a fixed idea of culture. These relations can either be used to British advantage to circumvent situations, or they pose a potentially divisive cultural difference, and a problem to be negotiated.

WHO ARE WE?

Partnering Indigenous Forces does not deal explicitly with institutional identity. Nonetheless, the text presents a strong and consistent narrative of identity more apparent than either *Culture and the Human Terrain* or *Understanding*. This is in part through the depiction of the relationship between the British Armed Forces and the Indigenous ‘Other’. Whilst *Partnering Indigenous Forces* contains a lengthy section looking at the wider definitions of defence relationships which fall into the category of ‘partners’ the main focus of the text is the process of partnering forces termed as ‘indigenous’ and seen as occurring in the context of ‘fragile’ or ‘failing’ states, in stabilisation or post-intervention scenarios. Whilst the text also situates the British Armed forces in relation to other actors -other coalition allies, particularly the US and NATO, and to the British civilian organisations and personnel – it is the relationship with the indigenous forces which is central, and is examined in this section.

Defining Indigeneity

The use of the phrase “indigenous forces” in this doctrine looks to be part of a move to standardise the terminology across the armed forces, and in line with the US.³¹ However the text does not offer a specific definition of indigeneity, despite the doctrinal conventions of defining terms. In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* great pains are taken to offer formal definitions of partner and partnering (1-3), fragile and failing states (2-2), mentors (3-11) advisors (3-12) and so on. *Partnering Indigenous Forces* also includes a ‘lexicon’ listing terms and their definitions from which ‘indigenous’ is conspicuously absent (JDN6/11 2011: Lexicon-1-4)³². The reader is left to extrapolate from use and context the meaning of ‘indigenous’.

In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* the term is used to encompass a range of different national security forces, operating in different historical periods, fighting various forms of warfare, in different geographical locations. Whilst a range of historical and contemporary examples of partnering armed forces is drawn on, from Oman to India, Kenya to Nepal,³³ no mention or experience is drawn from training and mentoring of forces in Europe. This is despite the small but long running programme the British Military Advisory Training Team (Czech Republic) initiated in 2000³⁴. The exclusion could be attributed to size or the permissive security context, but the text references both permissive and non-permissive contexts. Similarly whilst a passing reference is made to Irish Civil War of 1920-22 (JDN6/11 2011: 4-6) the systematic use of locally raised police forces in Ireland and Northern Ireland is not drawn on, despite the clear relevance to counterinsurgency, locally raised forces and military partnering. In a rare moment of reflection the doctrine does trouble its own terminology, invoking the meaning of indigenous as originating from/local to an area. The doctrine recognises that “the ‘indigenous’ army deployed in Helmand is an increasingly Dari-speaking force which, in some ways, is as alien to the countryside as are British forces” (JDN6/11 2011: 3-34). However, examples of colonial experience return to definitions of ‘indigenous’ which pay little attention to where forces are raised from, or deployed to, such as characterisation of the Ghurkhas and the Indian Army as ‘indigenous’ although commonly deployed outside Nepal or India (Annex 4A).

The characterisation of forces as ‘indigenous’ seems to rely on criteria other than simply origin and operation in a particular geographical area. Rather the stress on language learning and cultural awareness throughout the doctrine suggests an expectation of difference in these areas. Conversely

³¹ The terms ‘local forces’ and ‘host nation forces’ are used as synonyms in the doctrine, and in other doctrine and defence publications

³² It is also not defined in JDP 0-01.1 The UK Supplement to the NATO Terminology Database.

³³ Chapter 4 lists the ‘indigenous’ forces under British control in 1945 covering India, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (4-3)

³⁴ BMATT (CZ) has trained in Czech Republic, Kosovo, Morocco, Ukraine and Romania (Ministry of Defence nda).

the British Armed Forces and/as the reader, are assumed to share similar characteristics from which the 'indigenous' is contrasted. A homogenous British Armed Forces are understood as the norm, from which the differences of indigeneity (culture, language, and religion) are encountered and overcome. The definition is further cast as one of West / East, as the British are situated amongst 'other western armies' (3-19), as "western protestant capitalists" (5-4) and further, some cultural differences of the 'indigenous' may be "incomprehensible to a westerner" (3-34). In the following quote working with British, American and western personnel require a different mind-set from indigenous forces:

Training and operating with indigenous forces is not easy. As General McChrystal states, it requires a different mindset from when working with British, US or service personnel from other western nations and our allies. (2011a: 3-19)

This understanding of the British as 'Western', and conversely the 'indigenous' as Eastern, evokes an orientalist image of entrenched and essentialised cultural difference.

Benign Imperial Benefactors

The first two chapters stress the ultimate goal of autonomy for the partnered nations, in a way that suggests a self-conscious distancing from imperial ambitions. In contrast the second part of the document draws unabashedly from direct colonial experience as relevant to the current operations. The writings of T.E. Lawrence, in particular his *Twenty-Seven Articles* (1917), are a reminder of the ideal 'mentor' (4-10, 5-1, 5-5, 5-6, 5-9, and 5-10). Interestingly Lawrence warns against their wider relevance or use: "They are meant to apply only to Bedu; townspeople or Syrians require totally different treatment. They are of course not suitable to any other person's need, or applicable unchanged in any particular situation. Handling Hejaz Arabs is an art, not a science, with exceptions and no obvious rules" (Lawrence 1917:126). The annex to Chapter four demonstrates the use of colonial experience most clearly, drawing direct parallels between the British Indian Army (raised under a British colonial banner) and 21st Century Afghanistan:

On the surface Indian Army units had a similar organisation to their British counterparts, but the internal workings were quite different and provide a useful insight into life in an indigenous unit [...] In the 19th and early 20th Centuries, life in Nepal and India was tough. Both were endemically corrupt societies (at least from a British viewpoint), and nepotism was rife. This is not much different from Afghanistan in the 21st Century. (2011:4A-1)

Correspondingly, the description of the British officer in relation to their Indian troops is described as benevolent, and providing a good model for current operations, emphasising continuity:

The role of the British officer was to provide an environment based on fairness. Individuals were recognised for their achievements based on their own merit. The British officer was expected to offer guidance, direction and advice (JDN6/11 2011:4A-1)

This idealised historical telling of the British officership being one of fairness, guidance, direction and advice offers a model for what is currently prized in modern partnering relationships. British Armed forces are intended to offer support from a position of expertise to subordinated Indigenous troops. This colonial model echoes the story of ‘partnering’ as one of facilitating a progressive journey, analysed above. However, the positioning of this ‘progressive journey’ within the context of colonial histories reinvigorates those tropes which position the British Armed forces as benign, paternalistic and in a position of power. Colonial narratives of racial inferiority and degeneracy were often contrasted with more positively framed narratives of benevolent assistance, offered as a means of ‘civilising’ peoples who were understood as inherently inferior and requiring the help of their colonizers (Said [1979]2003, McCarthy 2009, McClintock 1995). This attitude is exemplified by Kipling’s often quoted and critiqued poem ‘The White Man’s Burden’ in which he urges America to take on the work of colonial ‘betterment’ in ‘savage wars of peace’ describing the process as one ‘To seek another’s profit, And work another’s gain’ (Kipling, 1899). Kipling is also quoted directly in the doctrine, echoing the notion of civilisation and drawing the work of partnership directly into parallel with civilising missions of empire:

As Kipling stated, ‘Asia is not going to be civilised after the methods of the West. There is too much Asia and she is too old.’ (JDN6/11 2011:4-11)

This quote also contains one of the few female pronouns in the text, gendering Asia as feminine, and correspondingly the West is both civilised and masculine, responsible for civilising Asia.

The resulting depiction within the text is one of western (and implied white), developed British Armed forces, linked to stability, democracy, development, progress and ‘civilisation’. The British, rather than understood as local or located in a specific place are universalised, contrasted against indigenous forces: eastern (not-white), under-developed, and associated with fragility, failure, and in need of help.

Inevitable Inferiority

Repeated references are made to the need for the indigenous forces not to mirror that of their western advisees, but be attentive to the demands of the local environment. However whilst this seems like a positive trope, more often it is embedded in a logic which still positions the British Armed forces as an ideal:

Match the construct of the newly-created indigenous armed forces to the requirements of the host nation to meet the challenges that they face. Realistically jointly identify what the actual requirement is and recognise that a ‘sub-optimal’ home-grown solution actually may be superior to your ‘perfect’ import. (2011a:3-3 see also 3-29)

Indigenous forces will, despite all the training and goodwill in the world, operate in a different manner to UK, and other western armies. (2011a: 3-19)

These sentiments are echoed in the maxim “On the look of Local Forces” which suggest not to ‘build forces in our own image’ and that it may be better ‘to organise the troops according to native methods’ (5-7). The indigenous are not capable of reaching a western ideal and are established in an inferior relationship. Perhaps the most baffling formulation of this is shown with a section entitled “Creating the Perfect Horse” which develops the idiom “A camel is a horse designed by a committee” into a more elaborate analogy. It describes trying to create a perfect horse to win and survive a race and by building the horse by committee, ultimately ending up with a camel. The analogy is continued by listing four things you could then do with the resultant camel, worth quoting at length:

- Flog it to death in the hope that it will last just sufficiently long enough to get to the finishing line, but it will die at the end.
- Understand the capabilities of the camel: it is not a horse (never will be a horse) but can do things a horse can’t. If we understand what those capabilities are, we can adjust our planned race route to maximise our chance of winning and ensure that it lives afterwards.
- We can sell it on to somebody else as their problem. We will get little for it, but we avoid the ignominy of entering the race only to lose.
- We can shoot the camel, cut our losses, and buy a horse (the Bremer Model in Iraq) which then needs breaking-in. The horse may be even more unreliable than the camel that has just been shot. (2011a:3-20)

In this analogy then, the intervening multinational coalition is the committee, the race is the counter-insurgency war and the indigenous forces are represented by the camel. Whilst the representation of the indigenous forces as a camel raises some immediate problematic linkages, the analogy (which the doctrine recognises is “crude” 2011:3-20) is intended as a warning to work within the apparent constraints of the indigenous environment. As with the other quotes above however, the indigenous forces and their capacities are positioned as inferior and unable to meet the western ideal, or be a ‘horse’. This is characterised as both problematic and as a potential advantage. However in all these scenarios – the ownership of the camel is unquestionably that of the coalition. The analogy also serves to situate the British as moral actors. Of the options, the second is clearly favoured, and symbolically represents partnering, and the ideal of understanding. The others options—flogging, selling, or shooting – are not only reprehensible but in particular show an abdication of responsibility. It is not much of a stretch to see them as a failure to fully take on the ‘white man’s burden.

Images

The images support this patterning of identity. Few of the pictures have captions or references in text, but are used illustratively, leaving the reader make their own connections. The picture heading Part 2 of the doctrine is reproduced below as Image 1. The black and white picture, taken during the Mau

Mau uprising depicts a young white man standing amidst a line of seated (mostly older) uniformed black men in uniform.



Image 1. Members of 4th Battalion, The King's African Rifles (NAM c1956 used JDN6/11 2011: 4-0)

The quote situated on the same page is contemporary, from recent US doctrine, drawing together the British brutal suppression of the Mau Mau rebellion with the contemporary conflict, albeit subtly. This image echoes the cover, which shows a contemporary young, white British officer leading a line of presumably 'indigenous' forces. As previously described, the images predominantly show white British military personnel, with those presumably representing indigenous people either in uniform or civilian dress, all people of colour. The resultant identity of the British is one of a homogenous group, imagined white, differentiated from the various 'indigenous' people they are being prepared to encounter. These images also tell a gendered story, predominantly showing military men. The one white British servicewoman pictured is in a non-combat role and engaging with a woman in Arab dress, presumably to be understood as indigenous.

This section shows the construction of an identity for the British through the representation of the indigenous other. Rather than tell us much about this generalised other, the text tells us more about the British Armed Forces identity acting as 'partner'. The direct invocation of imperial discourse is not only explicit in the referencing of colonial campaigns, but also implicit in the deployment of common imperial tropes of responsibility and paternalistic concern. As well as invoking discourses of racial inferiority, the representation of the indigenous other is heavily gendered relying on an imagined heroic white saviour, working with the constraints of the indigenous 'camel' to win an imagined race.

CONCLUSION

Partnering Indigenous Forces is a complex text, with conflicting narratives present within it. The practices of partnering: cultural and linguistic skill, communication and negotiation, gender sensitivity and relationship-building are non-combat and more commonly civilian skills. They are translated into a military context by their key role in counterinsurgency, and potentially future stabilisation operations and made sense of through an imperial masculinity. Unlike the technical-rational construction that dominated in *Culture and the Human Terrain* the practice of partnering is tied to relationships, between states and between people. The understanding, representation and management of these relationships- between Britain and the 'Host Nation', and the British Armed Forces and their Indigenous counterparts – is the central concern of the text.

The doctrine note emphasises working *with* the indigenous forces and at least in part includes elements of altruistic logic. The end goal is repeatedly articulated as 'self-reliance', independence, and autonomy for those forces being partnered. The practices of partnering: cultural and linguistic skills, communication and negotiation, and relationship building offer a space for mutuality and trust to reach that end. However, the strong reliance on colonial legacy of the British Armed Forces and the benign presentation of this legacy is such that the narrative becomes transposed into an imperial project of 'civilising'. This is further enforced by the contextual definitions of indigeneity which conflate multiple peoples and cultures. At times it offers a definition of indigenous forces resting on ethnic or racial difference from a western, modern, British other, imagined white and masculine. The positioning of the indigenous 'Easterner' against the Western norm clearly evokes an orientalist discourse, despite and enabled by the conflicting voices which overtly counter it within the text.

Partnering Indigenous Forces says much about the idealised imaginings of the British Armed Forces, set in contrast to the indigenous forces they partner. The rational, democratic, long-established, experienced and respected British Armed Forces emerge from the pages. Unable to draw on motifs of combat masculinity, instead working with indigenous forces is characterised as hard, skilled work which British Forces have, can and will again master. Discourses which invoke ethics position the British forces as moral, legitimate, responsible, dutiful and culturally adept. They are positioned as superior to their indigenous 'charges', even whilst they are reliant on them for access to cultural understanding and expertise. Although repeated effort is made to suggest the forces are working together, sharing interests and part of a joint project, this is counterbalanced by the logic that this is only possible if the indigenous forces make the right choices. The indigenous forces are working on a project orchestrated by the British, and considerable energy is expended to ensure through 'influence' or 'coercion' that this is maintained.

The model of masculinity in the text is not one of combat-linked masculinity; reference to combat are largely absent in the text. Rather, in its place a paternalist, imperial understanding of masculinity, which situated the British in a superior position to the 'indigenous' forces. The work that masculinity, and particularly through invoking the imperial narratives, is to anchor the practices of Partnering

within a military context. The long history and tradition of the British Armed Forces training and working with 'indigenous'/colonised forces gives weight to their inclusion within the contemporary range of military activity. That the work is a 'duty', a moral imperative for Britain, further brings it in line with military logics of patriotic service.

CHAPTER 7. UNDERSTANDING

An army that is out-thought will almost always be out-fought, no matter how bravely or skilfully its soldiers perform on the battlefield. [...] Success in the profession of arms is more often about *minds* than it is about *stuff*. (*Army Doctrine Primer* 2011:iii Emphasis in original)

Counterinsurgency is not just thinking man's warfare—it is the graduate level of war. (Special Forces Officer in Iraq cited in US Dept. Army 2006:1-1).

INTRODUCTION

Many of the proponents of population-centred counterinsurgency advocated a deeper shift in response to the conflicts, including military capacity to 'learn and adapt' a phrase which resonates throughout the counter-insurgency literature and both US and UK doctrine (see Nagl 2002 as a central text of the learn-adapt argument). The complexity of counterinsurgency in the 21st Century, understood as hybrid, networked, postmodern war demanded 'smarter' soldiers and 'learning institutions' to absorb the theories of counterinsurgency developed in the European retreat from empire, and apply them to the contemporary interconnected globalised world. The doctrine publication *JDP 04 Understanding* 2010 (from now on *Understanding*) does not expressly deal with Counterinsurgency activities or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However its content situates it as part of the British military response to the conflicts, and wider understandings of contemporary and future conflict, with its focus on developing a new 'thinking' approach to military practice and its links to developing cultural understanding.

The cover of *Understanding* foregrounds its unusual content, showing a photograph of Rodin's bronze "The Thinker". This image highlights the philosophical focus of the publication which sets it apart from the majority of doctrine which cover tangible activities, operations or environments. As the doctrine suggests *Understanding*³⁵ is "as much an attitude of mind as an activity" (JDP04 2010: 4-1). As in the preceding two chapters, the focus of the doctrine is on a subject matter which is not clearly linked to combat, more commonly associated with civilian academia, but has in the context of recent conflicts become understood as central to warfighting. The doctrine navigates the potential abstract qualities of the subject matter by insisting the development of this attitude of mind has concrete implications as "it permeates our day-to-day business" (4-1). So despite the intangible nature of the subject matter, *Understanding* endeavours to describe a concrete range of practices, skills, and activities, which are analysed in this chapter.

³⁵ *Understanding* is capitalised when referring to the British Armed Forces' concept of understanding, in a similar way to Intelligence, or Information

This chapter begins by exploring these aspects of contemporary warfare, through the rise of the ‘Soldier-Scholar’ in relation to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. It briefly traces the depiction of (Counter) Insurgency as a uniquely complex and political form of warfare, therefore providing the rationale for the rise of the soldier-scholar and placing a focus on military organisational culture and ability to learn and adapt. The chapter then turns to the analysis of the doctrine publication *Understanding*. It uses the three questions framework to analyse the documents, asking what the purpose of improved Understanding is in the doctrine. What practices are depicted as necessary for Understanding and finally who are the British Armed Forces are when they are doing Understanding.

7.1 THE SOLDIER-SCHOLAR AND “GRADUATE LEVEL” WAR

The reason counterinsurgency has been called the graduate school of war is because it requires a pretty granular understanding of economics, governance, and politics inside the state inflicted by the insurgency. So many of the best counterinsurgents are anthropologists or think like anthropologists. (John Nagl quoted in Khan 2014)

The resolution of complex contemporary crises may involve a hybrid of conventional warfighting and irregular activity combined, as well as concurrent stabilization activity, all in the same theatre. Boundaries between them may be blurred; they may change suddenly and very obviously, or more gradually, even imperceptibly, over time. (BDD 2011: 2-1 also in 3rd Edition 2008:2-1)

One of the repeated refrains in the discourse of Counterinsurgency is the emphasis on the intellectual aspects of the war. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to the reframing of Counterinsurgency both as war, but also a particularly complex, difficult and demanding form of warfare, both historically and even more so in contemporary environments (Kiszely 2006:9).

Prior to the War on Terror and even in its early stages many of the activities now argued as central to the prosecution of counterinsurgency were considered ‘activities other than war’ or in US parlance ‘Military Operations Other Than War’ (MOOTW or ‘moot-wah’). These not-war activities were often denigrated, and seen as surplus to the military’s central role. This dynamic is also gendered, peacekeeping activities were often derided as less masculine, even feminine in comparison to high tech, combat focussed ‘real war’ (Duncanson 2013:77, Duncanson and Cornish 2012:154-156). As US General John Shalikashvili, once chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is reported to have said “Real men don’t do moot-wah.”(Kaplan 2013). The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan marked a shift in this attitude. Counterinsurgency was cast not only as war, but more difficult and demanding than conventional war. So much so that counterinsurgency warfare demanded a new, smarter approach. The quote opening this chapter which typifies this idea, declaring counterinsurgency “is the graduate level of war.” the sentiment is used to frame the US Counterinsurgency Field manual (US Dept. of the Army 2006:1-1). The idea that counterinsurgency is a particularly challenging form of war is challenged (see Maxwell 2008; Gentile 2013) but the idea has considerable resonance. In presenting counterinsurgency as a ‘graduate level of war’, the depiction of Counterinsurgency as *war* and

demanding offensive, combat actions is central, and occurs simultaneously to implicating non-combat activities as part of war. These two aspects of Counterinsurgency are embodied in the figure of the Soldier-Scholar.

The motif of the ‘soldier-scholar’ is not new to the War on Terror, and many military figures over the years have also been lauded as scholars. However during the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the figure of the soldier-scholar has become highly prominent. Most notably in David Petraeus (PhD), but also in the popular figures of John Nagl (PhD), David Kilcullen (PhD) and H. R. McMaster (PhD) and even in James Mattis who although not holding a doctorate is a figure known for intellectual rigour alongside his fighting credentials³⁶. These men have held command positions, authored doctrine, and appeared publically to promote a population-centred counterinsurgency approach in the battles. Renowned military sociologist Moskos suggested that in the shifting forms of ‘dominant military professional’ the soldier-scholar and soldier-diplomat or statesman would emerge as dominant in the post-cold-war era, the era of the ‘postmodern’ military (Moskos 1998, 2000 see also Battistelli 1997:468). As a ‘dominant military professional’ it is in this period that the soldier-scholar has growing institutional weight and scholarly credentials become more common in those promoted to the higher ranks and in positions of power (Moskos 2000).

These soldier-scholars are proponents of the narrative of Counterinsurgency as the ‘graduate level of war’ as much as they are products of it. This quote is cited repeatedly by key figure and co-author of the US Counterinsurgency Field manual Lt. Col. John Nagl (he even mentions it in an interview on the popular US Daily Show aired in 2007). Khalili writes of the soldier-scholars:

The soldier-scholars all advance a notion of war-fighting which ostensibly takes into account political nuances, aims to win over civilian populations, and deploys an openly liberal discourse of salvation and humanitarianism. Not only is the soldier-scholar the ultimate in civic virtue, he is also the embodiment of international wisdom, war-fighting prowess, and a kind of knowingness about the world. (Khalili 2010b:1487)

For Khalili this formulation of the dominant military professional is one crosshatched by class, race and gender. She argues that “counterinsurgency provides a fertile ground in which a kind of new warrior masculinity regenerates itself through the figure of the soldier-scholar” (Khalili 2010b: 1491). Khalili finds the soldier-scholar, alongside war-like civilian women counterinsurgents to be the top of the gendered hierarchy of power in the war on terror. The positioning of counterinsurgency as especially demanding and complex, requiring military personnel of superior intellect more so than other wars, is a means of reasserting a gendered order.

³⁶ He reportedly packs a copy of *Meditations*, by Marcus Aurelius when deployed (Ricks 2007:313)

One further aspect of the contemporary campaigns is the blending of the ‘new wars’ idea with the global war on terror and the counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. The conflicts are often presented as examples of postmodern, or hybrid wars representing a particular blending of new technologies, blurred civil-military boundaries, multiple actors and intercommunal violence (e.g. Mattis & Hoffman 2005; Holmes 2006:135; Smith 2006; Kaldor 2007b; Robb 2007). In the UK the *Future Character of Conflict* Report released in 2010, the same year as *Understanding*, typifies this:

Future conflict will be increasingly hybrid in character. This is not code for insurgency or stabilisation, it is about a change in the mindset of our adversaries, who are aiming to exploit our weaknesses using a wide variety of high-end and low-end asymmetric techniques. These forms of conflict are transcending our conventional understanding of what equates to irregular and regular military activity; the ‘conflict paradigm’ has shifted and we must adapt our approaches if we are to succeed. (MoD 2010b:1)

This report carefully does not equate hybridity with insurgency or stabilisation, but simultaneously points to a shift in conflict which highlights asymmetric threats and identifies a shift in ‘conflict paradigm’. The changing adversary will, the document goes on to argue, “require us to think in a new way” about defence capabilities. It is in this context that it is argued that previously supportive functions of culture, language and civil-military relations will become ‘battle-winning’ (MoD 2010b:16). The ‘adversary’ is understood to be flexible, focused on exploiting the weaknesses of large democratic militaries, using whatever means offers an advantage.

To counter modern insurgencies, political violence and new hybrid threats, the focus is placed on learning and adaption. The skills demanded by the cultural turn – improved cultural and linguistic capacities and a greater grasp of political and social dynamics, are only one facet of this. There is also a discourse arguing for a shift in military culture itself to be able to adapt and respond faster and more effectively to the contemporary conflict environment (MoD 2010b). The military must become a ‘learning institution’ and it is in this context that the doctrine publication *Understanding* is released.

7.2 UNDERSTANDING

This part of the chapter turns to the joint doctrine publication *Understanding*. This is the first iteration of the doctrine, which is a fully authorised publication. This section offers a description of the text. The subsequent analysis using the three questions framework will draw out the tensions and implications arising.

Understanding is an 81 page document, arranged into four chapters. The first and last chapters are comparatively short, with the second and third chapters containing the bulk of the document. Chapter 3 is notably the longest, supported by two substantial case study annexes. The doctrine has fewer images than many recent doctrines, but deploys a number of diagrams to summarise concepts and illustrate points.

The preface entitled “Why a Doctrine for Understanding?” begins with the Sun Tzu quote recommending to “know the enemy and know yourself” which Porter (2009:6) described as a “standard cliché in works on insurgency and terrorism” (iii). After quoting the aphorism that ‘knowledge is power’ the preface outlines an idea of understanding as a process located a step beyond knowledge itself. It emphasises this distinction using the analogy of a chess game, where understanding gives foresight as to how the game may proceed, beyond a simple working knowledge of the rules. The preface then emphasises the utility of understanding to decision-making, positioning understanding as an essential tool for elite level decision-makers across government and defence.

Chapter one is a short, seven page chapter. It makes a case for the necessity of understanding in the national defence context. One section introduces the concept of ‘statecraft’ and links understanding to the use of power and influence at a national level. The following section looks to the ‘contemporary operating environment’ showing the necessity of understanding to counter threats outlined in projections of future conflict.³⁷ Finally the chapter concludes describing a role for a defence contribution to ‘national understanding’, outlining five categories under which this can happen: Horizon Scanning, Situational Awareness, Support to Policy, Strategy and Planning, Contingency Planning, and Defence diplomacy.

The chapter is supported with a two page case study, which describes Napoleon’s failed invasion of Russia in 1812 and argues this to result from a failure of understanding: Napoleon failed to understand the physical terrain, but also failed to understand the “psyche of the Russian people” (1A-1). Their characteristics and un-European behaviour in avoiding a conventional set-piece battle led to Napoleon’s ultimate defeat. The case study concludes that “Russia won because the over-confident Napoleon never tried to understand it” (1A-2).

The second chapter lays out a definition and framework for Understanding in a more substantive 15 page chapter. It is headed with a paraphrased or ‘reinterpreted’ quote taken from British comedian Peter Kay stating that “Intelligence is knowing a tomato is a fruit; understanding is not putting it in a fruit salad”. The brief introductory section describes the chapter as defining Understanding from a national and military perspective and how to exploit it to ‘our advantage’. The second section focuses on providing that definition as “the perception and interpretation of a particular situation in order to provide context, insight and foresight required for effective decision-making” with a footnote which references different Concise Oxford English Dictionary definitions. The terms insight, foresight and comprehension are defined and the relationships between situational awareness, analysis, comprehension, judgement and understanding are drawn. The section ends with a list of 7 objectives of understanding, returned to later.

³⁷ As are outlined in the publications *Global Strategic Trends*, and *the Future Character of Conflict*.

Section 3 focuses on drawing out characteristics of understanding. It stresses the importance of context, specificity and incomplete/partial knowledge which undermines a notion of ‘perfect’ understanding. Understanding is broken down into three types: Individual, Collective (within a group) and Common (between groups) summarised with a diagram. A boxed excerpt uses the UK Armed Forces to explore the idea of different types of understanding, detailing different common and collective understandings present across and within the three services, civilian agencies and other external bodies, including indigenous populations. A detailed and elaborate diagram of the ‘sources for understanding’ is provided. It both groups and maps the relationships and flows, which result in understanding, and differentiates between types and sources of knowledge. The role of time and change are addressed in subsequent paragraphs. Understanding is ultimately declared to be: Contextual, Perishable, Imperfect, Competitive.

The final section of the chapter offers six principles of understanding – Self-awareness, Critical Analysis, Creative thinking, Continuity, Collaboration and Fusion. Continuity is illustrated with a boxed extract detailing the measures used in Northern Ireland in the 1980’s to ensure intelligence continuity despite troop deployment cycles. The chapter has a 2 page annex, which offers a case study of Operation Crossbow in 1943-45 to illustrate the effective application of the principles of collaboration and fusion.

Chapter three takes a more applied look at how understanding can be developed. It’s the most substantial chapter in the doctrine. The first section states that building understanding takes time, information processing skills and an inclusive, flexible and adaptive approach by command. It also introduces the utility of a range of experts, including those from academic disciplines. The second section offers a framework for commanders to articulate their requirements for building understanding. It provides a number of generic questions which will elicit what exactly is needed for understanding: timescale, what is already known, knowledge gaps, continuity and detail. The third section looks at networks, stressing human relationships and both informal and formal intelligence networks.

The fourth section introduces and defines analysis as part of the conversion of situational awareness into understanding. The process is broken down into a number of steps – collation, evaluation, integration, interpretation and continuous review. This is worded in terms of hypothesis generation and proving/disproving. Several “problem-solving frameworks” are suggested, drawing on frames

from the field of strategic management: PEST and PESTLEI³⁸. As well as specifically developed military frameworks – PMESII, STEEPLM, and ASCOPE³⁹ (3-4).

These frameworks are seen as compatible with the “Human Domain Framework”; the focus of the fifth section. This framework is designed to bring the “totality of the human sphere of activity or knowledge” into view. It breaks this down in to 4 ‘environments’: cultural, institutions, technology and infrastructure and the physical. This section outlines the main components in each of these environments and their interdependency. It then considers actors in the framework. It recommends that actors be seen as part of a ‘dynamic spectrum’ rather than bounded categories of ‘friendly forces’, ‘hostile forces’ and ‘civilians’. Actors are then categorised as state actors, non-state actors, global actors and local actors. Actors are also to be seen as group members. Group membership is explained as multiple and overlapping, illustrated with a diagram. Group allegiance is portrayed as fluid and the ‘reconcilability’ of actors is explored; correspondingly the practice of colour coding actors/groups dependent on their hostility and relationship to ‘us’ is critiqued.

Section 6 moves to look specifically at the “Human Terrain” which refers only to the ‘actors’ within the human domain. It suggests that the term ‘culture’ and ‘human terrain’ are at times used synonymously and defines both as “the study, analysis and interpretation of the actors and their interaction with their specific socio-cultural environment” (3-11). Culture is defined as more concerned with the “why” questions and human terrain the “who what where and when”. It advocates the utility of social scientists to strengthen a human terrain analysis. A boxed excerpt looking at the UK PREVENT counter-terrorism strategy is used to reinforce the utility of ‘understanding the nature and dynamics of communities’.

Section 7 recommends the need for an open-minded command climate, which encourages critical analysis and creative thinking to develop understanding. Self-awareness and cultural awareness are also seen as key, with the latter being illustrated by a boxed extract from TE Lawrence’s 27 Articles. Finally the section suggests a need for an efficient, dynamic and co-ordinated approach to managing ‘information anarchy’

Section 8⁴⁰ looks at the ‘enablers’ for understanding: information management, both physical and technical components, targeted education and training and the collaborative networks. Section 9⁴¹ is

38 PEST: Political, Economic, Social, and Technological PESTLEI: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental, Information (See Henry 2011:48, Kachru 2009:84 N.B. Whilst both PEST and PESTLE are common management models, the addition of the “I” is rare outside military frames)

39 PMESII – Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure and Information. STEEPLM – Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legal, Ethical and Military. ASCOPE – Area, Structure, Capabilities, Organisation, People and Events (4-3)

40 also labelled as 7 in a typographical error

a summary of the preceding sections, comprising a diagram and explanation of the frameworks and models introduced, pulling them into a linear process by which means and targets for influence can be identified. There is also a list of 18 guidelines by which understanding can be built or facilitated.

Chapter 3 has two annexes. The first is a four page case study of “The Cyprus Problem” which looks at actors and complexity in the long running British involvement with the island. It highlights the cultural and institutional factors in impacting the British role. The second case study is nine pages, looking at the British loss of Singapore in 1942 to the Japanese. The case study concludes with the damning attribution of the loss as “due to the obstinate refusal of too many of the critical officers and officials refusing to make a proper estimate of their enemy, their environment, and their own capabilities and to understand the human domain within which they were operating” (3B-8)

The doctrine concludes with a short seven page chapter. The implications of Understanding are categorised as ethos, philosophy and culture dealt with in section one and enhanced decision making in section three. Section two takes ethos, philosophy and culture in turn showing the implications of development of Understanding in each. Philosophy is broken down into ‘a professional approach’ and ‘proactive approach’ to information sharing. This section is illustrated with a boxed section looking at the role of doctrine in understanding. The third section offers models of decision-making process and the role of understanding in these, including judgement, risk-taking, communication and networks. The chapter concludes bringing together the importance of understanding to effective decision making and the need to develop the attitude to achieve this, arguing that *Understanding* is the means to support that. The structure of the document is show in Figure 14

Preface
Contents
Chapter 1: The Importance of Understanding
Annex A: Case Study 1. Failure to Understand: Napoleon and the Invasion of Russia 1812
Chapter 2: The Fundamentals of Understanding
Case Study 2. Effective Collaboration and Fusion: Operation CROSSBOW 1943-1945
Chapter 3: Developing Understanding
Annex 3a – Case Study 3. The Cyprus Problem: Actors And Complexity
Annex B – Case Study 4. Understanding and the Human Domain: The Loss of Singapore 1942

Figure 14: Structure of *Understanding*

The doctrine is specifically recommended to be read in conjunction with British Defence Doctrine and JDP2-00 (3rd Edition) Understanding and Intelligence (2011). It is also linked to NATO doctrine Allied Joint Publication-2 (AJP-2) Joint Intelligence, Counter Intelligence and Security Doctrine and JDPs 01 Campaigning, 3-00 Campaign Execution and 5-00 Campaign Planning. The sections on information management and communications are linked to JDP 6-00 Communications and Information Systems Support. It recommends JDP 3-40 Security and Stabilisation: the Military Contribution (2009) as providing guidance on the application of understanding within the stabilisation and counter-insurgency environments. Understanding also shows a hierarchy tree of doctrine to situate the document within that hierarchy, highlighting the links to intelligence and communications over other military roles.

7.3 PURPOSE, PRACTICE, IDENTITY: THE THREE QUESTIONS

The following section uses the ‘three questions’ framework to analyse *Understanding*. It follows the pattern of the preceding chapters, using the questions “What do we do? How do we do it? and Who are we?” to trace the narratives of purpose, practice and identity in the doctrine publication.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE DO UNDERSTANDING?

The narrative of what purpose Understanding serves in the doctrine has three strands. Whilst the doctrine as a whole is clearly concerned with categorising and explicating Understanding, as it relates to the military, the doctrine explicitly states a number of objectives for its role:

- a. Providing the context for making better decisions.
 - b. Supporting the development of policy, strategy and plans.
 - c. Helping develop alliances or agreements.
 - d. Achieving influence.
 - e. Focusing on a particular operating environment.
 - f. Developing an appreciation of the actors within an environment.
 - g. Developing empathy with another individual, group or community
- (2010: 2-2)

Of these seven, it is two that are most prominent throughout the doctrine, occurring repeatedly to strengthen the case for improving Understanding(s): decision-making (objective a, and implied in b) and achieving influence (listed as d) both of which are explored in more detail below. In contrast, the other objectives listed above do not recur in the same way. Whilst elements of the other goals are referred to again, it is usually in relation to improving decision-making and/or influence, and (e) occurs only in limited sections of the doctrine. The relationship-building in (c) and (g) and implied perhaps in (f) are referenced, albeit rarely as goals in their own right, explored below.

The first situates Understanding as central to decision-making, the second, similar to *Culture and the Human Terrain*, ties Understanding to achieving Influence over others. The final strand is relationship-building. Due to the nature of the topic, this section first looks at the definitions of what Understanding is, before turning to those three areas.

Defining Understanding

The doctrine offers a formal definition of Understanding, which is added to the British Armed Forces lexicon and used across doctrinal outputs and other defence publications. This short, focussed definition is first presented in chapter two:

The perception and interpretation of a particular situation in order to provide the context, insight and foresight required for effective decision-making (2-1)

However the text offers further explanation as well as multiple other explicit and implicit definitions and meanings. The text presents Understanding as a high level, perhaps highest level, cognitive skill, the practice of which facilitates other activities. Developing the ability to Understand and achieving the best possible or ‘correct’ understanding is the pinnacle of command ability and comes at the end of the imagined learning or knowledge processes. Understanding then is situated beyond gaining information and beyond military Intelligence. As the following diagram at Figure 15 also indicates, it is situated above or beyond situational awareness, analysis and judgement, and on a level with insight and foresight.

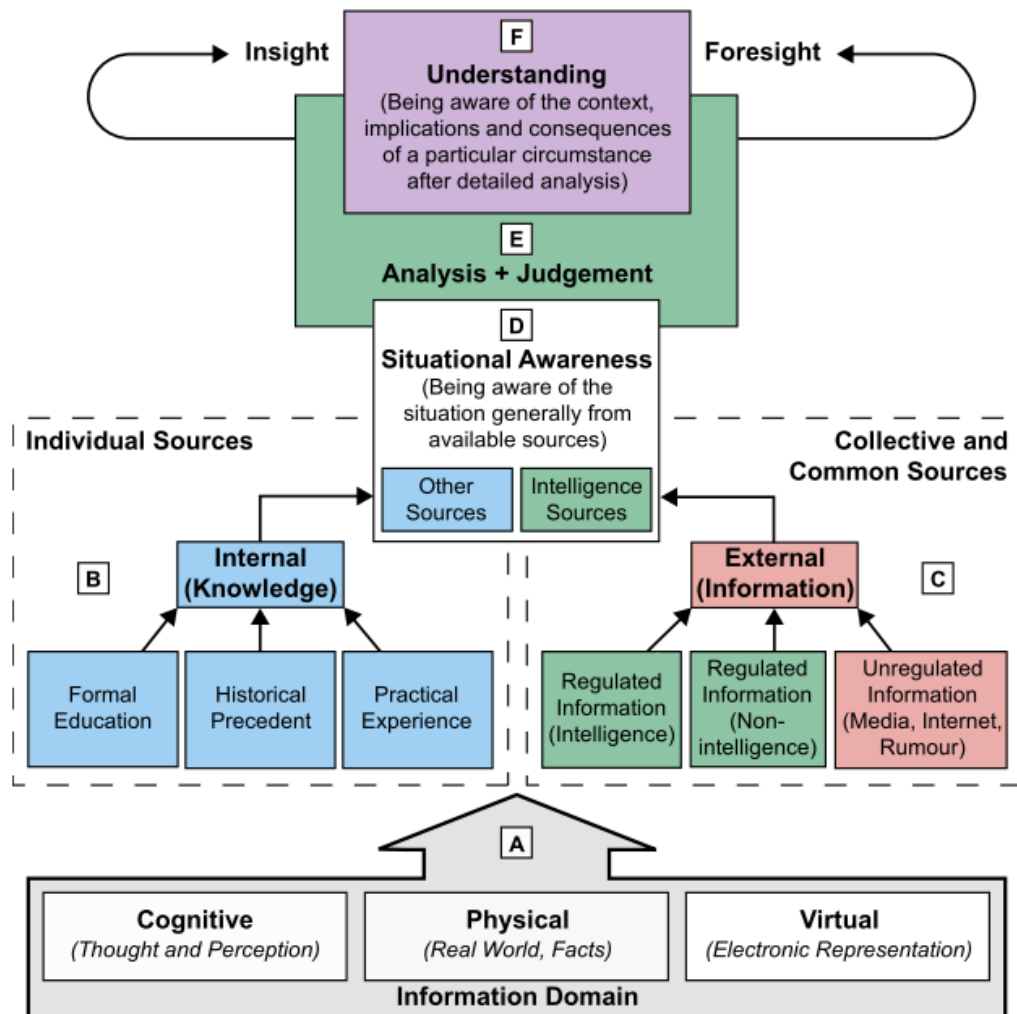


Figure 15. Showing “Figure 2.2 the Sources of Understanding” (JDP04 2010:2-5)

This diagram shows the positioning of understanding as the result of a vast array of inputs. It offers another definition of understanding as “Being aware of the context implications and consequences of a particular circumstance after detailed analysis” (2-5), a far more general definition than the one quoted above. Throughout the doctrine, in spite of the clarity of these definitions, the term is not used consistently and at times the referent seems unclear or multiple. One distinction in the usage of the term is between the use consistent with the above definitions as a skill, practice or action and the use of the word to describe “an informal or unspoken agreement or arrangement” as in “an understanding between people”.

The distinction is seen in categorisation of Understanding into three types: Individual, Common and Collective in Chapter 2. Whilst Individual Understanding refers to the capacities of an individual, Collective understanding refers to the intra-group level or “the shared perspective held by members of distinct groups that have their own ethos, creed and identity” clearly referring to an ‘unspoken agreement’. Common Understanding refers to the inter-group level and is defined as “the ability to

comprehend perceptions of groups other than our own and to establish a common baseline for communication, interpretation and action” (2-3) seemingly combining the two aspects of understanding as both a skill or ability held and the formation of a baseline agreement. The relationships are illustrated by a diagram, reproduced here as Figure 16.

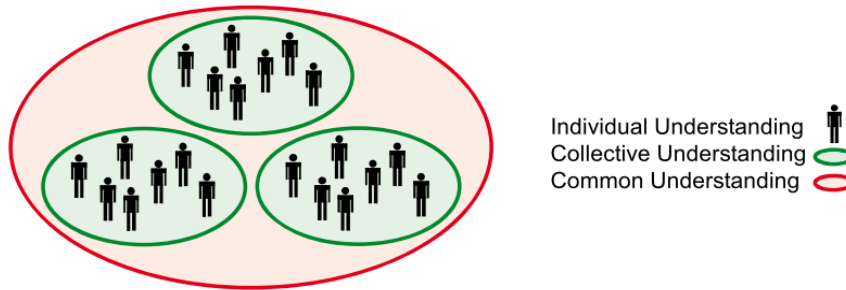


Figure 16 . Types of Understanding (2-4)

What is perhaps most important in this distinction is that the definition of ‘Collective Understanding’ and elements of the ‘Common Understanding’ definition as an ‘agreement’ or ‘arrangement’ are relational. They necessitate a degree of co-creation, or at least engagement in a relationship between actors in a specific context. This sits in contrast to the development of an individual or organisation’s ability or skillset which can be considered and developed with some abstraction from context or relation. Although the primary focus of the document is on developing ‘Individual Understanding’ this variation in use of the term holds parts of the doctrine in tension with others and at times results in confusion.

The following sections look at three themes which depict the purpose that these varying definitions of understanding serve within the document.

Decision-Making

Throughout the doctrine, Understanding is linked to decision making. The term “decision making” recurs 50 times, but perhaps more revealing is the way the relationship between understanding and decision-making is used to frame the content. It is firmly established in the preface, repeated in the introduction, and is also central to the conclusion. The importance of Understanding is clearly justified through its relationship to decision-making, being presented as the basis on which decision-making can be built. In the preface Understanding is described as “indispensable to informed decision-making” (iii) and a ‘non-discretionary’ military activity (iii). In the introduction the definition is further elaborated by explaining that Understanding is “about making better decisions based on the most accurate depiction possible” (2-1) and the quality of understanding helps to manage “the level of risk required in decision-making”(2-8). In chapter 3, the changing command/operating environment and resulting “additional complexity facing today’s leaders” (3-13) makes better Understanding a way of mitigating these circumstances which place a “greater reliance on decision-making based on effective understanding” (3-13).

Whilst Understanding is most commonly implied to be about understanding external actors and environments, the doctrine also devotes considerable space to self-understanding (which is returned to in more detail later). Even this inward-facing Understanding is also linked to decision-making.

Understanding our own culture, society and the wider population and their perceptions of us and what we do, and of how this impacts on political and military decision-making. (3-21)

Here we can see domestic understanding, and elements of self-reflexivity are justified by their impact on decision-making. The final, fourth chapter of *Understanding* lays out the implications of Understanding for the British military, and suggests this impact is seen in just two areas, firstly in the broad arena of ethos, philosophy and culture, but secondly in “enhanced decision-making” (4-1). This section, which leads into the conclusion of the doctrine, offers the most developed depiction of the relationship between Understanding and decision-making in the doctrine. This section begins by summarising the first chapter of the doctrine:

Chapter 1 describes how understanding supports decision-making by providing the context, insight and foresight to address a problem. It helps to shape how we look at a problem (problem-framing) and relies on knowledge and information, analysis, judgement – both deliberate and intuitive – and information management (4-3/4)

In this way, each stage of the decision-making process is seen to be supported by Understanding, which in turn is seen as the product of a specific skill set. We see that Understanding is positioned as subordinate to and supportive of decision-making. This is made clearer in the illustrative diagram which integrates a 5 step model of a “Decision-Making Process” comprising a linear process of “direction, consultation, consideration, decision; and execution” (4-4) with ideas about the development of Understanding from Situational Awareness and Analysis. This diagram is reproduced below.

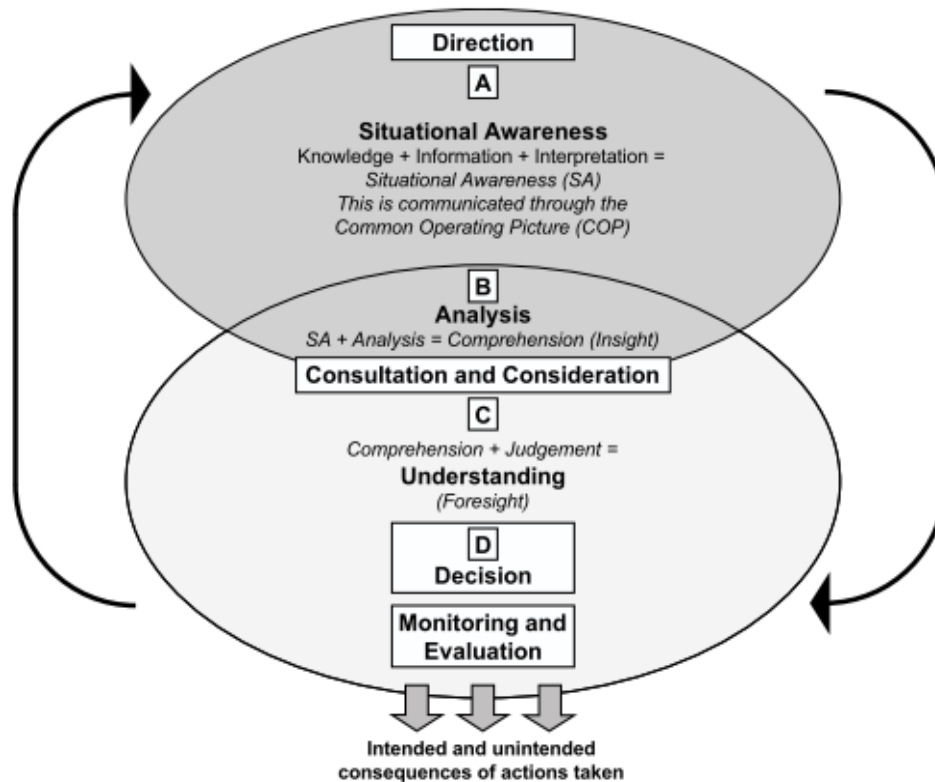


Figure 17. "The Role of Understanding in the Decision-Making Process" (4-4)

This diagram is accompanied by a detailed paragraph further describing these relationships. What is interesting is that Understanding or "true Understanding" is a stage achieved in a linear process, from A – D, which is then re-initiated after Monitoring and Evaluation (described in-text as E). Understanding here is not a shift in culture, philosophy and ethos, but rather an instrumental part of a process leading to enhanced decision making. Further Understanding is quantifiable – a sufficient level of understanding is not only desirable, but a deficiency may impair decision-makers.

Decision-makers can naturally become risk-averse when they have insufficient understanding of a given situation, although this can also apply when decision-makers have clear understanding. (4-6)

The relationship is portrayed is a simplistic as "Understanding underpins effective decision-making. The better our understanding, the more effective our decisions will be."(4-8). Decision-makers then must then judge a sufficient level of understanding to proceed (4-7) and balance risks, and increased understanding will always improve decision making. Decision-making is however not the only purpose for Understanding depicted within the doctrine.

Determine what type of understanding you require; do you need to understand something for your own decision-making? Are you trying to achieve collective or common understanding, or are you trying to influence others? (3-21)

As the quote above suggests, it is also used for relationship-building in 'achieving' collective or common Understanding, or for purposes of 'influence'. The role of influence is considered below, before turning to relationship-building.

Influence

Although not quite as prominent as decision-making, the role of understanding in influence activities is also referred to repeatedly throughout the document. The term is repeated some 40 times within the doctrine, although not always in relation to the military conducted activity. The importance of Influencing activities is introduced early on, as the first chapter sets out "The relationship between Understanding, Power, Influence" as its first consideration. Influence is defined broadly as "the capacity to have an effect on the character or behaviour of someone" (1-2). It stresses roles for political, military and economic credibility and a 'coherent diplomatic agenda'(1-2). The doctrine goes on to articulate the relationship between Understanding and Influence:

Understanding assists in the identification of those we might wish to influence and the most effective approach for it. We must, however, be careful not to conflate understanding with influence. Defence needs to be able to listen to its partners as well as persuade them how to act. We need to develop meaningful 2-way relationships with others who are acting with and alongside us, and we need to interact with those with and amongst whom we are operating. There is therefore a clear difference between transmitting a message to a target audience and genuinely interacting with that audience. (1-2)

This is a nuanced assessment of the relationship between understanding and Influence, which is used to articulate a difference between modes of interacting with others. Whilst influence is seen as defensible and necessary part of the military skills set, space is left for alternative visions of interactions which stress mutuality. Understanding is kept separate here and presented as a potential basis for both modes of interaction. However despite this distinction drawn early on, the idea of understanding as a tool for achieving influence is consistently presented in the rest of the document. As the quote below shows:

Analyse the factors of the human domain framework based on the cultural, institutional, technological and physical environments in relation to the actors. Understand the interaction between them and identify how to achieve influence (for example the use of hard or soft power to best influence their decision-making). (3-22)

Here Understanding is presented as a tool to assist in achieving influence, through the identification of who to exert influence over, and the means to do it (see also 3-20, and at 1-2 quoted above). One paragraph in the second chapter reverses the relationship to suggest influence to be part of the mind-set needed for Understanding:

Understanding requires a mindset of learn-adapt-exploit-influence. Rapid learning and adaptation allows faster evolution of our understanding to account for the changing context, leading in turn to a

decline in unforeseen consequences, more effective exploitation and greater influence. (2-6)

However it becomes clear in the second sentence that understanding rests on the “learn-adapt” and results in more effective exploitation and increased influence as the end goal. Here, as with decision-making, Understanding becomes a tool for military efficiency. Similarly when the concept of strategic narratives is introduced in the latter part of Chapter two, Understanding is a necessary tool. It is recognised that other groups also seek influence:

In many cases, narratives produced by different groups will compete for influence among a specific audience. Recent operations demonstrate how our adversaries will seek influence among local, regional and world audiences through their own narrative, probably based on their comprehensive understanding of the local situation. Our own narrative will often compete with those of external individuals or groups holding views so ingrained or diametrically opposed to our own that they will be difficult to influence. (2-7)

The situation described above shows Understanding is essential to counter the advantage of other actors’ “comprehensive understanding of the local situation”(2-7). This then places Understanding as central to enabling influence activities in this environment, as the paragraph continues:

Understanding is therefore critical to the development of our own narrative, which must remain sensitive to the external environment and competing narratives. Our aim must be to match such understanding to gain influence over their decision-making and with the appropriate audiences. (2-8)

Understanding is reinforced as a crucial element of influence in operating contexts where there are competing propaganda/Information campaigns between the British Armed Forces and other actors. This is particularly central to Counterinsurgency doctrine, as well as Stabilisation and Peace Support Operations.

Relationship-Building?

In the stated military objectives for Understanding, three have aspects of relationship-building. In particular, the final objective was “Developing empathy with another individual, group or community” and there was also a reference to building alliances and agreements (2-2, see above for full quote). However despite their presence in the objectives, ideas of relationship building are not prominent within the doctrine and are included here to emphasise the difference between stated objectives and the bulk of the text. Scant mentions of working with other agencies occur (1-2, 1-5). Defence diplomacy is discussed briefly at 1-6, but is seen as aiding understanding rather than vice versa. Definitions of common, and collective identities also imply relationships (2-4) and references to working in inter-agency environments, and with a host nation imply elements of relationship-building through references to networks, or collaboration (2-7, 2-11,2-12). Relationship-building is seen in Section III on Networks (3-2) where successful human networks rest on “an ability to establish

and maintain personal relationships”. However the text also cautions that “relationship building within collaborative and free-flowing networks, particularly within open systems, can appear nugatory or wasted activity” and must therefore be carefully managed (3-2). Again, relationship-building, serves the development of understanding not vice-versa. There are two clearer references:

The objective must be to influence actors to be receptive towards a neutral and non-hostile relationship with our perspective. Mutual recognition of different perspectives provides at least the basis for continued dialogue and the opportunity for further engagement. (3-8)

The quote above positions mutual recognition as a basis for dialogue, although it is linked here to influencing. Also, in the checklist ending chapter three it is recommended that personnel should “Understand the value and importance of personal relationships with other actors throughout the operating environment.” but this is not fleshed out further (3-21). In summary, other than the initial statement, there is no consistent story of relationship-building as ‘what we do’ in reference to Understanding. Rather, the doctrine shows the ways in which understanding is vital to decision-making and achieving influence thereby given prominence as vital military activities.

HOW DO WE DO UNDERSTANDING?

As we see from the above, the doctrine situates Understanding itself not as a core military activity but rather a collective stance or behaviour which underpins a range of other military objectives. This section looks more closely at those activities or practices which constitute or support Understanding presented in the doctrine. The picture is at times a confused one, in part relating to the multiple definitions of Understanding and the intangible subject matter. The tone and tenor of the document attempts to match other doctrine which more commonly describe particular operations or environments and consequently are able to present clearly defined practices. However, the wide remit and goal to create an attitude of mind in *Understanding* results in some ambiguity. This section looks at four themes which emerge from the text, predominantly in Chapters 2 and 3. They are firstly the development of Self Awareness, perception and critical analysis, and secondly the related emphasis on the need to build Cultural capacities. Thirdly, it looks at the need to create the right organisational culture within the Armed Forces for Understanding to be developed. Finally this section considers the reliance on models and frameworks and the management of Data to support understanding.

Self-awareness, perception and critical analysis

The doctrine contains several references to the need for self-awareness. Beginning in the preface with the quote from Sun Tzu not just to know the enemy, but also to know yourself (iii). It is declared as the first principle of understanding in chapter two:

It is important to be aware of why or how we know something and the limitations of certainty that knowing entails. We should audit our knowledge for its grounds, origins and composition with rigour and clarity, taking into consideration our own biases. (2-10)

In the 'Guide for the Development of Understanding' a list of checkpoints, the first point is self-awareness 'knowing ourselves as individuals and as organisations'(3-21). Self-awareness in *Understanding* has a different tone from *Culture and the Human Terrain* where self-awareness is more closely tied to empathy, and human universalities. Here, self-awareness is linked to decision-making and analysis. The third chapter of *Understanding*, in a discussion of perceptions suggests:

Internal sources, education, our experiences and prior beliefs shape the way we individually perceive situations. This issue reinforces the first principle of understanding, the need for self-awareness. However, there are limitations to perceptions. Often the initial perception may be flawed or wrong because of biases in the interpretation, inaccurate intelligence, false information or deception. There is also a tendency to look at a problem from only one standpoint. Commanders should recognise the impact that perceptions can have on the development of understanding and their decision-making process. (3-14)

The prime concern regarding self-awareness is the development of the ability to avoid biases which may negatively impact decision making. Again in the 'Guide for the Development of Understanding' the third recommendation about "Understanding our own culture, society and the wider population" is important ultimately because it "impacts on political and military decision-making."(3-21).

This analytical approach is also seen in the second 'Principle of Understanding' - Critical Analysis. This concept is more commonly seen in academic settings than military contexts, which is recognised in the definition provided of Critical analysis as:

The intellectual discipline that applies deliberate introspective judgement to interpret, analyse, and evaluate a problem and explain the context upon which that judgement is based (2-10).

The paragraph goes on to suggest this can be achieved through tools such as creating analogies and 'red teaming' (trying to 'think like the enemy' and interactive war-gaming). The use of analogies is common in military doctrine and publications, as well as in training. Techniques such as red-teaming, are gaining increasing traction with the publication of substantive guidance note by the DCDC (MoD 2010c). Whilst both techniques may allow for critical voices, they also structure and regulate them within a particular framework and set of acceptable practices.

The third principle of Understanding is 'Creative thinking' which in the doctrine is defined as approaching situations from an "original or unorthodox" perspective. Creative approaches, similar to critical thinking and self-awareness, is not usually associated with military activities, which tend to encourage predictability and control as previously discussed in Chapter Two. However the invocation to creative thinking is also structured and located within a particular framework. It is suggested it can assist in the creation of hypotheses and can be stimulated through the use of flow diagrams, or through 'a more structured step by step process'. The framing of self-awareness, critical analysis and creative thinking is within a narrow framework of improved decision-making. They are linked to a model of

positivist social science, returned to below in the use of models and frameworks, which delimit the impact of the shift. This framing invokes a rationality as an ‘instrumental reasoning’ which is profoundly gendered.

Creating the right culture

The latter three principles of Understanding: Continuity, Collaboration and Fusion rely on the establishment and maintenance of complex interpersonal networks of sources, co-workers and between different agencies (section IV 2-9). The section on collaboration draws heavily on and references Ian Brooks’ *Organisational Behaviour* (2003), a classic text in management and business studies. These ideas also filter into later discussion in the doctrine on creating the right command climate (3-14). The doctrine is concerned with the creation of the right conditions to foster the development of Understanding. The right command climate is articulated as a key ‘enabler’ for understanding.

Commanders must strive to create “an atmosphere that encourages open-mindedness, critical analysis and creative thinking”. This is a climate which “should enable staff to tell commanders what they need to know, even if it appears to contradict their views” (3-14). The latter sentiment also articulated in the previous chapter where commanders are encouraged to ‘support the airing of dissenting views’ (2-12). The idea of open-mindedness is recurrent in the doctrine as is the idea of creativity which builds on that mentioned above⁴². The idea that subordinates should be able to critique their commander’s views is dependent on a climate that is also rooted in trust within the command team. Developing trust, both within the command team and in relationships with other actors, is repeated as central to the development of Understanding (3-1, 2-10, 3-2, 3-2 footnote, 3-14, 4-3). This also relies on the management of complex interpersonal and communication skills:

Patience and listening skills are vital. So is the ability grasp somebody else’s perspective. Commanders should expect and plan to operate at lower tempo to allow time to develop such perspectives. (4-3)

The above quote is taken from a section which covers ‘Military Culture’ and how this affects relationships with different services and other agencies or allies. The need to allow time and resource for the development of relationships shows the importance placed on these skillsets.

Cultural Skills

Several pages are devoted to cultural awareness and capacity in Chapter 3 of *Understanding*. It is described as “critical to understanding” (3-15). Cultural capacities are presented as having three different levels ‘General Awareness’, ‘Cultural Competence’ and ‘Cultural Expertise’ (The acronym ACE is suggested as a mnemonic 3-15). These are ranked; the development of ‘expertise’ is not

⁴² See references to open-mindedness at: 2-7, 2-9, 3-14, 3-19, 3-22, 4-3 and 4-7. References to creativity occur at: 2-9, 2-10, 2A-1, 2A-2, 3-3, 3-10, 3-14, 3-19 and Lexicon-2.

expected to be possible for all individuals. Just as *Culture and the Human Terrain* argues, *Understanding* warns that “the necessary attributes may not necessarily be those required in other aspects of military life’ (3-16, in *Culture and the Human Terrain* 2013:3-5 and discussed previous on page 103). However, it goes on to reassure that “true cultural experts can be campaign winners” and cites T.E. Lawrence as a notable example (3-16). The interchange between questioning the ‘military’ basis of the skills and then linking them to the very military goal of campaign success, highlights a tension. Cultural skills are both required and arguably incompatible with other demands of military life. This is seen similarly in both *Culture and the Human Terrain* in reference to Cultural Specialists, and in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* in the ideal characteristics and skills of a good mentor (discussed on page 103 and page 113 respectively).

Models, Frameworks and Data Management

Understanding makes considerable use of numbered and lettered lists, structured frameworks and diagrams to present its content. The use of these features is not unusual for doctrine. However the use of diagrams at times the contrast with the subject matter, which describe practices which are not easily reducible to a diagram - intuition, trust-building, or creativity. Information is produced within a positivist framework, relying on a notion of neutral, scientific presentation which is disrupted by intangible or unscientific language or phenomena. There are several mentions of hypotheses in the text (1-6, 2-6, 2-10, 2-11, 3-3) and even the use of equations to describe relationships (2-2).

At the beginning of the third chapter in the doctrine is a quote from T. S. Eliot suggesting “the first condition of understanding a foreign country is to smell it” seemingly at odds with the scientific approach (3-1). However, rather than signifying a boots-on-ground or experiential approach the following text goes on to suggests a need to engage a variety of different sources and reach out to ‘experts’ including academics. This is a particularly structured approach.⁴³ Considerable space is given within the doctrine to the need to amass and manage large amounts of variously sourced information and Intelligence. The processing of data from online, official, unofficial, verified and unverified sources and the need to evaluate it, are prominent concerns within the document.

The text attempts to make more concrete the development of understanding through engaging established frameworks for use in analysis. The section explaining what ‘analysis’ is adopts positivist language, referencing hypothesis testing, which may be ‘proved’ or ‘disproved’. However it is also suggested hypothesis-generation could emerge from the commanders ‘intuition’ which perhaps sits uneasily with the positivist language.

The specific analytic frameworks which are suggested briefly for use include some borrowed from marketing and management social science, with others developed in military contexts. The PEST and

⁴³ Perhaps this draws on the original context of the quote, which is taken from a review of work by Rudyard Kipling which conveys to the reader the sense of being able to smell India (Eliot 1942).

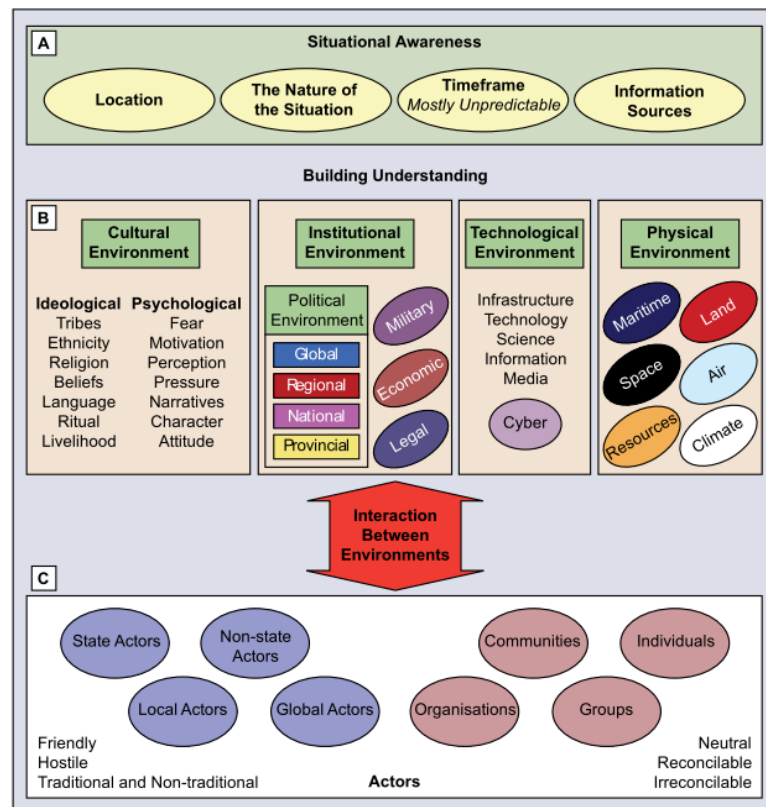


Figure 18. Showing reproduction of The Development of Understanding: Human Domain Framework (2010:3-20)

PESTLEI, PMESII, STEELEM, and ASCOPE are described as ‘problem solving frameworks’ and PMESII and ASCOPE are also used in *Culture and the Human Terrain* (Understanding 2010:3-4, C&HT 2013:3B-5, see page 98 above). These are situated within a wider, and more detailed Human Domain Framework, and alongside Human Terrain Analysis. They all serve to provide a structure under which a range of environments, factors and actors can be identified as needing to be understood. This can perhaps be seen best in the diagram used to summarise the Human Domain Framework, reproduced at Figure 18.

This diagram breaks down the complexity of a huge range of factors into a simplified and categorised collection of lists, showing a range of factors to be considered for Understanding.

The four themes outlined above describe a range of skills and practices suggested to develop Understanding within the document. The individual skills suggested include open-mindedness, creativity, critical thinking, reflexivity, trust, language skills, cultural awareness, advanced and complex communication and interpersonal skills. These predominantly social and communicative skills are included within a range of models, frameworks and categorisations which allude to a scientific, logical framing, such as the development and testing of hypothesis. There seems to be a tension with attempts to articulate a diffuse range of required skills and practices to reach a level of

‘Understanding’ and the need to articulate these required skills in concrete and systematised frameworks, closely tied to the practical demands of military activity.

WHO ARE WE?

This section looks at the construction of ‘who we are’ in the text. The text does not explicitly deal with identity and differs somewhat from both *Culture and the Human Terrain* and *Partnering Indigenous Forces* which both consistently look at relationships between the British Armed Forces and ‘Others’ – either those with a different culture, or those being partnered. In both cases there was also an explicit dealing with gender, or women. In contrast *Understanding* inconsistently engages others, and makes no reference or mention of gender. Nonetheless, identity is constructed within the text, and this is made visible through the application of a gendered lens.

Although the text does not consistently refer to a specific ‘Other’ there are several references to other actors. The text uses four case studies to elaborate on points used in the text. The first is that of Napoleon’s failed invasion of Russia in 1812, the second, intelligence operations in WW2, the third looks at the Cyprus Problem, and the fourth describes the loss of Singapore 1942. The first case does not involve British actors, it describes Napoleon’s failure to understand Russian military culture. It serves to position the text as part of a long tradition of historical military studentship, and European military culture. The second case, is a positive tale of British intelligence success in the WW2, it shows the UK as successful against the Germans, attributing this to the handling and management of Intelligence sources and counter-intelligence measures. The final two case studies are situated within the context of the decline of British imperial capabilities. Both cases depict the failure of British understanding and the complexities of internationally and locally embedded conflicts. It is noticeable that these case studies all focus on historic campaigns (although the Cyprus conflict is ongoing the focus is on earlier period). More recent examples are mentioned within the text, with a boxed excerpt looking at the Northern Ireland conflict from 1969 – 1980’s to illustrate ‘continuity’, and another which considers the UK counter-terrorism strategy PREVENT, focussing on Muslim radicalisation (respectively at 2-11 and 3-12). There is noticeably little explicit engagement with either counter-insurgency or Iraq, Afghanistan or the war on Terror. When discussing strategic narratives the text uses the phrase ‘Host Nation’ repeatedly (2-7) and Iraq is used to illustrate competing narratives (2-8). Osama Bin Laden is used as an example of a ‘Global Actor’ (3-8 alongside Nelson Mandela) and warlords are mentioned as local actors (3-8). In discussing attitudes and behaviour, the text describes both a British naval officer and an Afghan farmer would react differently in different contexts:

A British naval officer will act very differently in MOD Main Building compared to when watching a rugby match at Twickenham; similarly, an Afghan farmer will act in one way when negotiating a bride price for his daughter’s wedding, but act differently when attending a shura with local NATO forces. (3-9)

This is the only mention of a woman in the text, and both actors here are constructed in reference to masculine norms. The point is reinforced by petal diagrams which depict the 'Afghan Farmer' and the UK. It is reproduced on the following page.

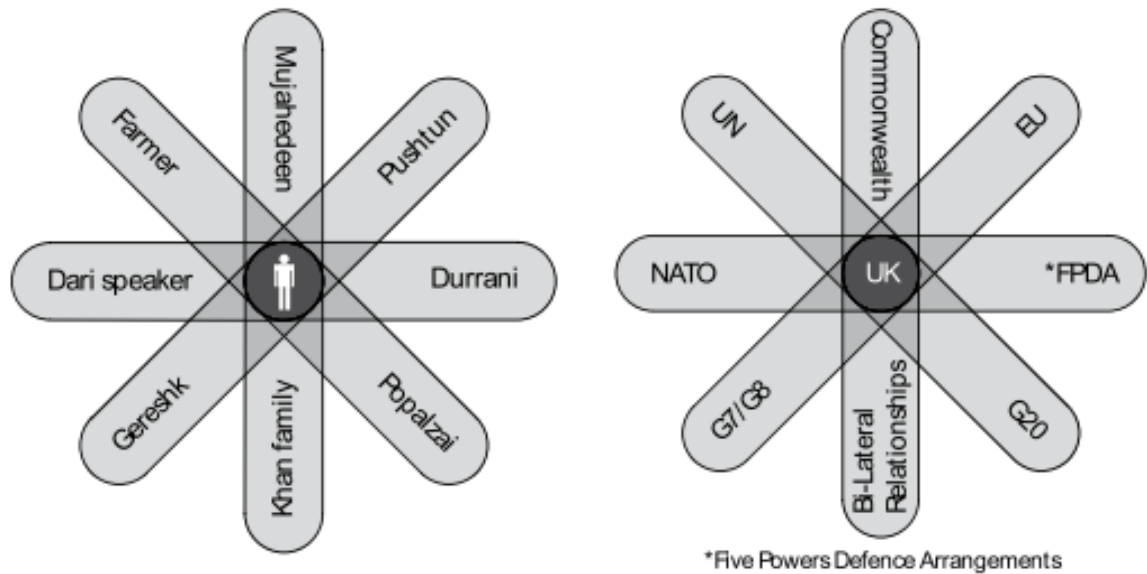


Figure 19. Reproduced diagram "Membership of Multiple Groups" (3-9)

The contrast here between the Afghan man and the British state, contrasts the international organisation against an individual, the latter showing familiar, domestic, local and ethnic groups, the latter powerful international organisations and partnerships.

The strongest presence of a racialized Other, positioned against the British, is seen in the description of T.E. Lawrence and the exert reproducing four of his 27 Articles which are proclaimed to 'remains pertinent today [...] particularly when working with indigenous forces' (Lawrence 1917, cited at 3-16.). The language here is heavily embedded in the imperial relations of the time and offers advice on how to manage relations with "Arabs" including imparting that "the secret of handling Arabs in unremitting study of them" (3-7). Similarly to *Partnering Indigenous Forces* the effect of directly drawing parallels from British imperial history to the present day, invokes a racialized identity for the British Armed Forces, imagined as the decedents of Lawrence. However outside of this, and the brief quote from Eliot, referencing Kipling, the imperial record is less consistently present in the doctrine.

What emerges most clearly in the positioning of the British Armed Forces is the model of a rational decision maker. In the previous sections it has been seen that the idea of 'Decision -Making' is central to the text and in the preceding section the reliance on frameworks and reference to positivist social-science. This combines within the text to produce the effect of the rational decision-maker as the central image. Rather than constructed in relation to human 'others', this decision maker is

positioned against the imperfection, complexity and unpredictability of information and operational environment. The rational decision maker is able to master this chaotic, irrational complexity.

Feminists have argued that the rational actor, along with the citizen and knowing subject is gendered masculine, and not gender-neutral (Peterson 1992; Hooper 1998; Tickner 1992, 2001:33) and further as European, white and heterosexual (Peterson 1999:38, Wadley 2009:47). The rational decision maker seen in *Understanding* is similarly constructed. Sjoberg summarises:

In this view, rational calculation is not an objective, attainable, and desirable end, but a partial representation of both interest and actors' representation of those interests. In this way through gender lenses, rationality has been seen as importantly incomplete, leaving out significant (if not the most significant) factors that go into decision-making. (Sjoberg 2013:118)

Applying a gender lens to *Understanding* shows the gendering in the recourse to the idea of a rational decision-maker. This is not a gender neutral formulation but rather one that rests on an idea of mastery and control. In chapter two one of the 'inherent' characteristics of *Understanding* is presented as that of competition (2-7). The exact nature of this competition isn't made clear, but seems linked to the influence of a strategic narrative approach, referenced in the section, where the political aspects of conflict are cast as 'competing narratives'. Individuals and groups then may compete for the "primacy" of their own individual or collective understanding. This idea is made clearer when translated to the context of operations, where the idea of understanding becomes part of an effort to gain an upper hand over adversaries or a 'host nation':

Since expeditionary operations are likely to have to overcome the advantages in understanding enjoyed by the host nation, our ability to compete effectively to gain and maintain the initiative will, in part, rely on our ability to adjust or improve our understanding quickly in response to the environment. (2-7)

Understanding is also seen as competitive in its relation to the 'knowledge' which it is reliant upon. Where "individuals or groups may compete for authority over, or ownership of, various information or knowledge sources that contribute to understanding" (2-7). This kind of competitive view of 'Understanding' reinforces the ideas prevalent in the subordination of *Understanding* to decision making and influence. Here *Understanding* is seen as inherently competitive though, and by association a more traditional military activity. This is elaborated into the idea of narratives, where it's suggested that 'adversary' narratives based on local understanding are in competition with the British Armed Forces narratives, and are hard to influence (2-7). The management of *Understanding*, through the management of narrative against 'Adversaries' can be framed as competitive, and perhaps even combative.

The final chapter of the document most clearly articulates a sense of identity. It engages with the idea of creating an 'Ethos' and having a 'Philosophy'. The ethos is declared as:

The British Armed Forces' ethos centres on 4 tenets: vision (how we see ourselves and our purpose); the desire to achieve operational excellence (professionalism); our values (what we stand for); and our traditions (character). (4-1)

Only professionalism is defined fully in the following section as “having impressive competence in a particular activity; an expertise in our field”(4-1). This section on philosophy goes on to articulate a “Professional Approach” as one of the cornerstones of defence. British professionalism is linked to excellence, and Understanding is seen as part of ‘our’ responsibility as ‘defence professionals’. The gendering of this expression of professionalism is returned to in Chapter Eight.

There are two other facets discussed as part of decision-making in Chapter Four as contributing to the role of the decision-maker, which are commonly associated with masculinity: that of judgement and of risk-taking.

Understanding is an imperfect art and therefore all understanding involves risk; better understanding can reduce the potential for risk, but risks will still have to be taken. Risk-taking and risk management are important constituents of decision-making. (4-6)

Decision-making is depicted as needing the judgement of leaders, and judgement can either be intuitive or deductive. Intuitive judgement, seems to stand against the idea of the rational decision-making, but is described as being based on “intellect, experience, education, training and effort” drawing it back into a masculine evocative framing. The idea of risk-taking is also strongly associated with constructions of masculinity (see Barrett 1996 for discussion of this, also Chapter 2). However here, rather than the unbridled risk taking associated with combat masculinity, the risk-taking is balanced. The commander must not eschew risk, but equally must consider and balance it, with understanding in order to enact decision-making. The construction of masculinity here then is controlled and restrained, as well as rational and analytical. The terms associated with decision-making or makers in Chapter Four of Understanding are listed in Table 7.

Table 7. Showing Terms Associated with Enhanced Decision Making in *Understanding*, Chapter Four.

Terms Used with Enhanced Decision Making/Makers	Poor Decision Making/ Makers
Balanced Risk-Taking	Risk-Aversion
Intellect	Stupidity / Foolishness
Judgement (Deductive / Collaborative)	Indecision
Judgement (Intuitive – based on intellect, experience, education, training and effort)	Biased
Timely	Too slow
Effective	Ineffective
Knowledge	Ignorance
Analysis	Irrationality
Information Management	Disorganisation / Unsystematic
Network Exploitation	
Clear vision and intent	Confused
Rationale	
Commander / Leader	Follower / Subordinate
Open-mindedness	Close minded
Communication	Isolation

CONCLUSION

Training is appropriate preparation for the predictable; but for the unpredictable, education is required. As has been pointed out, operations involving counterinsurgency are characterized by unpredictability, and also by uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity; this calls for minds that can not only cope with, but excel in, such an environment, thus minds that are agile, flexible, enquiring, imaginative, capable of rigorous analysis and objective thinking, that can conceptualize and innovate. (Lt. General Sir John Kiszely 2006:11)

Understanding is unusual in its intangible subject matter and is a new publication without precedent. The repeated and differing definitions of understanding throughout suggest an ongoing struggle to grapple with the presentation of its subject matter. Switching between military necessity and more

philosophical ideas, the doctrine seems to be reaching for a way to describe higher level cognitive abilities which go beyond its usual institutional training structures and philosophies.

The presentation of what comprises Understanding and its function within military contexts plays a role in the articulation of an institutional identity in the doctrine. The skills and practices highlighted in this chapter are open-mindedness, creativity, critical thinking, reflexivity, trust, language skills, cultural awareness, advanced communication and interpersonal skills. These are not those usually associated with the military work or identities, but are rather associated with civilian and often academic practice. There is an act of translation occurring, where broadly civilian intellectual skills, are put into a pragmatic military context.

This doctrine describes Understanding, as central part of British Armed Forces practice. Although the focus on the cognitive could be partly explained by the command and strategic level focus of the document, many of the skills are also described as necessary for staff and lower ranking officers (1-3, 1-5). In the preface, Understanding is coded as a 'non-discretionary' element of decision making (iii) and similarly in the concluding chapter:

It is our responsibility as individuals, as single Services and as defence professionals to understand ourselves, the world around us, and our potential adversaries. We must want to understand. Understanding is one of the cornerstones of our military philosophy (4-1).

Understanding is presented as a 'cornerstone' of military philosophy, and central to military practice. Consequently the skills and practice of open-mindedness, creativity, critical thinking, reflexivity, trust, language skills, cultural awareness outlined above as necessary for understanding, must also be or become central to military practice. This positioning troubles the well-established understandings of appropriate military practice and the boundaries between military and civilian spheres. These skills are positioned within the military sphere of professional expertise, requiring identity construction in relation to them.

Within the doctrine we see this tension negotiated by the subordination of understanding to more firmly established military objectives of achieving Influence and to support decision-making and perhaps offers an explanation for the downplaying of relationship building elements. Influence, and Decision-making reaffirm the military purposefulness of Understanding, whilst relationship-building would perhaps further trouble it. Applying a gendered lens also makes sense of these boundary lines, where the civilian, no-combat skills can also be seen as associated with femininity. However, similarly to *Culture and the Human Terrain* we see the construction of a masculine identity – and here it is that of the rational decision-maker - within which the practices are situated. The role of the rational decision-maker rests on the (gendered) construction of rationality and the approach to the skills outlined above is often mediated through the deployment of models and frameworks. The appeal to a scientific paradigm reframes the skills as tools rather than a shift in mind-set. Again, this is similar to *Culture and The Human Terrain*. The open-mindedness, creativity, critical thinking,

reflexivity, trust, language skill etc. become the instruments of the rational decision-maker who is able to use them within a scientific paradigm to achieve particular ends.

Throughout the document there is steady tension between suggesting a substantial institutional shift in attitude and thinking and a shorter term vision where “better understanding” and its requisite skills become simply another new instrument in the tool kit; readily deployable for use in competitive or combative operations. Understanding here, rather than a substantive shift in thinking becomes part of a tool kit for maintaining advantage over adversaries.

Throughout the document the practical implication of developing a certain ‘attitude of mind’ through these non-combat, civilian practices appears to be in tension with the need to work within the stable discursive structures of the military. To firmly situate Understanding within the military discourse, practices are linked to certain tasks or objectives: decision-making, influence and relationship building and through the figure of the rational decision-maker. It is this practical application of philosophy which both justifies a need for building Understanding and offers a goal-orientated rationale for the cultural shift it implies. This is used to ground the ideas of ‘understanding’ to produce a document which fulfils the function of doctrine as guidelines for practice.

Whilst it is possible to advocate for both a cultural shift and the specific utility of understanding, the two approaches have different implications and rest on different definitions of Understanding and its role in the institution. The two approaches impact on the extent to which the advanced social and interpersonal skills are destabilising to existing narratives of military identity. The open-mindedness, creativity, critical thinking, reflexivity, trust, language skills, cultural awareness etc. offer in many respects a clear departure from the classic tenets of military culture supported by persistent combat-linked notions of military masculinity. Shifting emphasis, or expanding it to include these skills as tenets of military identity calls into question those classic military tenets.

Yet if Understanding can be a limited function, with the deployment of the skills listed above relevant only to certain contexts, limited to certain personnel, and deployed in support of kinetic and influence operations and firmly linked to masculinity through ideas of competition, mastery, rationality and control the potential destabilisation is limited. In *Understanding* both tendencies are present and persistent with neither clearly dominating. What becomes clear, in the confusion of the text, is an organisation struggling to reconcile conflicting influences.

PART III – ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The following two chapters conclude the thesis. The first chapter brings together the analysis in part three, returning to the original research questions of the project and tracing the way practice of the British Armed Forces is inextricably implicated in the construction of identity. It traces the relationship between the dominant narratives of identity – seen in *British Defence Doctrine* and that in doctrine depicting non-combat practices of counterinsurgency. It analyses the contradictions and inconsistencies and the role of masculinity in re-establishing continuities and negotiating the boundary lines.

The concluding chapter of the outlines the contribution this thesis makes in tracing the relationship between understandings of practice, narratives of purpose and identity in the British Armed Forces adaptations to contemporary counterinsurgency. Counterinsurgency troubles the boundaries between war and peace, enemy and ally, and between military and civilian work; these are boundaries which define the British Armed Forces. It explores what is at stake in making sense of shifting boundaries and the contribution of this thesis to feminist debates on the military as an actor for peace.

Chapter 8. Challenges and re-established continuities

...in the eyes of the warrior, counterinsurgency calls for some decidedly un-warrior-like qualities, such as emotional intelligence, empathy, subtlety, sophistication, nuance and political adroitness. Armies that find difficulty with these unwelcome features tend to view counter-insurgency as an aberration, look forward to the opportunity of returning to “proper soldiering,” (Lt. Gen. Sir John Kiszely, 2006:10)

INTRODUCTION

Population-centred Counterinsurgency is problematic for Armed Forces. Like peacekeeping operations, it demands practices that are ‘un-warrior-like’ to borrow Kiszely’s term, that personnel are required to assist in reconstruction efforts, train security forces, attend community meetings, learn a language and a new etiquette. However beyond that, these activities must also somehow accommodate the qualities associated with them however ‘unwelcome’. Kiszely (2006:8) argues, with reference to allied doctrine, that this is problematic for the military because the warfighting ethos is essential as “to be capable of warfighting, an army needs to have as its characteristic cultural spirit, or ethos, one which is warfighting-oriented, and its soldiers need to have a self-perception as warriors”. Counterinsurgency, with its attendant complications and blurry boundaries is not easily understood within this frame and he argues for those militaries in which soldiers “see themselves purely as warriors” they are likely to “view counter-insurgency as a fringe activity, rejecting the notion of expertise in counter-insurgency as a meaningful yardstick of military prowess or professionalism.”(Kiszely 2006:19-20).

This thesis is concerned with how the Armed Forces construct their identity in relation to practice. The previous chapters have shown the complexity and contradictions which emerge in trying to understand practices which are ‘un-warrior-like’ within a military setting. In this chapter I return to my research questions to consider how non-combat practices relevant to population-centred counterinsurgency are constructed in relation to the ‘warfighting ethos’ derived from conventional warfare. I addressed this question of how these practices are then made sense of as part of the wider construction of British Armed Forces identity in and across the doctrines and identify the discursive constructions which make sense of them across the doctrine.

The chapter focuses on the multiple forms of identity construction occurring within the doctrine, drawing on the methodological framework built in Chapter Three, and used in the analysis in Part II. The chapter is particularly engaged with disruptions to more stable forms of identity, those understood as showing an easy correspondence between the different aspects of ‘What we do’ ‘How we do it’ and ‘Who we are’ which we see in *British Defence Doctrine*. I argued in Chapter Four that the depiction in *British Defence Doctrine* (2011) of an idealised and hegemonic masculine identity emerges in a configuration of the protection and promotion of British national interests (what we do)

and the practices of warfare (how we do it). A particular identity both underpins and emerges from that configuration, where 'Britishness', a warfighting ethos and masculinity are interwoven and ascribed mutually reinforcing attributes.

This correspondence forms part of the stability and a shift in one of these aspects causes some level of destabilisation and requires a corresponding confusion and response. Such disruptions and the responses

to them are moments of potential, for substantive change, for critique, and for the reconfiguration of identity to engage other practices, and roles. This chapter looks at what happens when this configuration is destabilised - that is, when the different elements of identity (of what is being done, how it's being done, and who is doing it) don't correspond easily, or appear to have changed in relation to the pre-established institutional norms. The chapter seeks to explore the potential response to that disruption. It draws on the discursive linking and differentiation, and spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions taken from Hansen (2006) and explored in Chapter Three. It considers how this is made sense of in the doctrines *Culture and the Human Terrain* (2013), *Partnering Indigenous Forces* (2011) and *Understanding* (2010). I trace the ways in which they re-stabilise and re-establish connections with wider institutional identities and, through doing so, show how these serve as discursive limits to the practices at issue.

As we have seen, the doctrine documents analysed in the previous three chapters all explain and prescribe practices which are not obviously 'warlike', rather they could be understood as civilian activities and are at times less clearly linked to British national interests. These practices both produce and demand different configurations of identity. Chapters five, six and seven have shown that these three doctrines, located within specific institutional and operational contexts, construct complex and different identities through answering 'what we do', 'how we do it' and 'who we are'. The intention is to examine the way that non-combat, civilian-like practices seen as integral to population-centred counterinsurgency warfare are made sense of within the body of doctrine; an institutional site which both constructs and reflects institutional norms and is part of their internal and external dissemination. Doctrine is both indicative of wider patterns within the Armed Forces and part of the process which shapes them. As such, it plays a role in articulating the discursive limits of military activity and identity. In this chapter I further expand on the ways in which already established and institutionalised forms of military identity, anchored in masculinity, provide a frame for understanding non-combat practices as part of counterinsurgency war. I argue that even when the



non-combat practices challenge the warfighting ethos, this framing as masculine allows them to be understood as military work.

The chapter is structured into two parts. The first part draws the doctrine together. Firstly it identifies the intertextual links between the doctrines, including the gendered context. Secondly it identifies a set of practices emergent from population-centred counterinsurgency and common to all three doctrines, categorising these as *Self Awareness, Engaging Others and Critical Analysis*. Having established these common practices they are put into conversation with *British Defence Doctrine* and it is argued that they challenge the 'Warfighting Ethos' it outlines. This provides the context for the second part of the chapter, which considers the way the implications of this challenge are limited by their construction and positioning within the doctrines. This part considers this along four lines. Firstly, their positioning as instrumental ends to achieve influence and further the national Interest. Secondly, their positioning as part of colonial and imperial traditionalism. Thirdly, their links to a construction of masculine professionalism as an alternative to the warfighting ethos. In the fourth section the tension between wider adoption and restriction to specific personnel is explored as an unresolved tension with potentially wide repercussions.

8.1 COMMON THREADS

The three doctrines *Culture and the Human Terrain, Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding* analysed in the previous chapters were published from 2010 – 2013 and can be seen as responses to counterinsurgency warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. These conflicts sparked an intense period of defence interest in the best means of conducting counterinsurgency, drawing from previous campaigns and contemporary experience on the ground. The population-centred counterinsurgency approach identified as 'best practice' stressed cultural knowledge and the rhetoric of winning 'hearts and minds' and professed humanitarian concern for the populations of both countries (see Dixon 2009, and Gilmore 2011 on the US). The doctrines studied in this thesis form part of the UK Armed Forces' doctrinal response to the imperatives of population-centred counterinsurgency and this 'cultural turn'. The previous three chapters have analysed each doctrine separately, only briefly noting the relationships between them. In this section the relationships between them will be drawn out, firstly looking at the formal linkages, then at direct references and citations before turning to content and terminological similarities. The second section looks at the representation of men and women. The third section identifies and draws together groups of particular skills present across all three doctrine documents, of particular relevance to exploring population-centred counterinsurgency and the 'cultural turn'. This part concludes by arguing that these practices, drawn from these three doctrines, together offer a challenge to the warfighting ethos.

INTERTEXTUAL LINKS

Whilst the three doctrines have many points of similarity they were developed and released in different years, and fulfil different purposes and roles. *Partnering Indigenous Forces* published in 2011 has a clear operational purpose. It emerged directly to fulfil a need for guidance drawing on the

experiences of personnel working closely with the Iraqi and Afghan Security Forces. UK Armed Forces were engaged in security sector reform and the direct training and mentoring of various security forces (including police and border forces) as well as undertaking joint counterinsurgency operations with them. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, ‘partnering’ often occurred in an environment of extreme insecurity and often became the task of combat forces. *Culture and the Human Terrain* published in 2013 and its predecessor, *The Significance of Culture to the Military* in 2009 were raised with less specific operational purpose. The intent of both was to respond to a demand for guidance on how to approach ‘culture’ which had become a central refrain in warfare that centred on local populations and political solutions (Porter 2009). The first version of the doctrine note was originally envisaged to situate ‘cultural skills’ as part of the counterinsurgents’ tool kit, with the later publication showing the refinement and further integration of those skills institutionally with the development of a new specialist role. *Understanding* published in December 2010 followed nearly two years after the initial published doctrinal publication on culture. It is a more authoritative publication, fully integrated as authorised doctrine. However it is distinct from many other doctrine publications which tend to be task focused. Instead it addresses a less tangible need: thinking and learning. It is not directly linked to counterinsurgency or stabilisation scenarios, but aims to provide practical guidance on how to enact that better ‘thinking’ in all operations.

All three documents contain a paragraph entitled ‘Linkages’ which is the common format of contemporary British doctrine. This brief paragraph lists what doctrine should be read together, and any other linkages. These are written hierarchically, with the most important listed first. These are shown in Table 8 for each of the three doctrines considered.

Table 8: Showing Formal Linkages in Doctrines

	JDP 04 Understanding (2010)	JDN6/11 Partnering Indigenous Forces (2011)	JDN 4/13 Culture and the Human Terrain (2013)
Read with	JDP 0-01 British Defence Doctrine	JDP 0-01 British Defence Doctrine	JDP 0-01 British Defence Doctrine (4th edition)
	JDP 2-00 (3rd Edition) Understanding and Intelligence in Support of Joint Operations.	JDP 3-40 Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution	JDP 04 Understanding
		JDN 6/10: Security Transitions.	
Should also be read with	NATO doctrine Allied Joint Publication-2 (AJP-2) Joint Intelligence, Counter Intelligence and Security Doctrine	JDP 04 Understanding	JDP 2-00, Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations (3 rd edition).
		JDP 2-00 (3rd Edition) Understanding and Intelligence in Support of Joint Operations.	
Linked with	JDP 01 Campaigning	JDP 01 Campaigning	JDP 3-40 Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution
	JDP 3-00 Campaign Execution	JDP 3-00 Campaign Execution	
	JDP 5-00 Campaign Planning	JDP 5-00 Campaign Planning	
Additional details or guidance	JDP 6-00 Communications and Information Systems Support to Joint Operations		JDP 2-00, Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations (3rd edition).
	JDP 3-40 Security and Stabilisation: the Military Contribution		
Draws on work from	Brunel University's Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies by Dr Philip Davies and Dr Kristian Gustafson.	Brunel University's Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies by Dr Kristian Gustafson.	

Data from: JDN 4/13 Culture and the Human Terrain (2013), JDN6/11 Partnering Indigenous Forces (2011) and JDP 04 Understanding (2010). The 'linkages' paragraphs are formulaic. The left hand column shows the context in which each of the other doctrine are referenced, with significance ordered from highest at the top to least at the bottom. Vertical column shows each of the three doctrines analysed.

Several overlaps become clear in this table. Firstly, all three doctrines initially list *British Defence Doctrine* which is a common convention across all the subordinate joint doctrine publications and notes. Secondly the table shows considerable overlap in linkages to other doctrine; all three are linked to *Understanding and Intelligence Support to Joint Operations (3rd edition)* and more significantly here also *Security and Stabilisation: the Military Contribution* the doctrine which lays out the joint services approach to counterinsurgency and stabilisation environments, the significance of which is discussed in Chapter 3. Finally, we can also see clearly in this table that both *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Culture and the Human Terrain* are formally linked to *Understanding*.

In addition to the stated relationships between the doctrines above, there are direct references in the texts to each other, which confirm or establish links. Both *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Culture and the Human Terrain* reference or quote *Understanding* in the text, and *Culture and the Human Terrain* also references *Partnering Indigenous Forces*; these references are summarised in Table 9.

These direct references or quotations follow logically from the dates of publication, with later publications citing the earlier ones. However *Partnering Indigenous Forces* does not reference the predecessor of *Culture and the Human Terrain* which was published in 2009 and active at the time of writing.⁴⁴

As we can see in Table 9 the citations are not extensive, which is not unusual as doctrine does not often cite directly. The strongest links are from *Culture and the Human Terrain* referring back to *Understanding*. In the preface to *Culture and the Human Terrain* a paragraph situates the doctrine as following on from *Understanding*:

Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 04, *Understanding* introduced the idea of the human domain as the totality of the human sphere of activity or knowledge. It described human actors by their individual and collective identities, by scales of influence and by their defining characteristics and views (for example, non-state actors, organisations, friends, allies, adversaries, proxies or neutral). This publication seeks to expand on that work; expanding culture, its relevance to military operations, the cultural capabilities available for force preparation and employment, and the processes for the analysis of culture and its consideration within the operational estimate (*Culture and the Human Terrain* 2013: iii to IV)

⁴⁴ It is unclear why this is the case. It is possible that it was already under review for revision, or reflects different writing teams. The writing styles of the two doctrine are very different, and *The Significance of Culture to the Military* feels dated in comparison to *Partnering Indigenous Forces*.

Table 9: Direct References in Texts

Referring Text	References...
	... to JDP 04 Understanding (2010)
JDN6/11 Partnering Indigenous Forces (2011)	Formally Linked
	Cites to define ‘individual understanding’ (3-15)
	Cites to define ‘common understanding’ from (3-15)
	Cites to define Human Domain (3-16)
JDN 4/13 Culture and the Human Terrain (2013)	Formally Linked
	Block quote in Preface (iii-iv)
	Revision of Human Terrain Definition (1-2)
	A definition of ‘Understanding’ in the military context is quoted in a footnote (3-4)
	Referenced in the lexicon for the entries on ‘horizon scanning’, ‘situational awareness’ and ‘understanding’ (Lexicon-6).
	... to JDN6/11 Partnering Indigenous Forces (2011)
JDN 4/13 Culture and the Human Terrain (2013)	In the future, we are likely to operate as part of a coalition that is also likely to include an element of partnering and mentoring to achieve the mission.” (2-4)

Culture and the Human Terrain is envisaged as taking on and expanding the work of *Understanding*. It draws from the models introduced in *Understanding* which form a broader basis for the *Culture and the Human Terrain*’s more specific focus. In the same vein it refines a definition of the “Human Terrain” introduced in *Understanding* (2010:1-2). It also defined the use of the term ‘Understanding’ with a footnoted quotation of the definition provided in *Understanding* (2010: 3-4). The same definition is used similarly in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* (2011:3-2) where it is attributed to a later doctrine publication⁴⁵, which itself refers to *Understanding*. The use of the same definition of

⁴⁵ JDP 0-01 8th Edition, UK Supplement to the NATO Terminology Database, 2011 – a glossary of terms.

‘Understanding’ by both *Culture and the Human Terrain* and *Partnering Indigenous Forces* derived from *Understanding* show the interwoven nature of the doctrine. *Culture and the Human Terrain* also cites *Partnering Indigenous Forces* when noting that the likelihood of operating ‘as part of a coalition that is also likely to include an element of partnering and mentoring’ (2013:2-4) as a scenario requiring cultural understanding which does not focus on an adversary.

In *Understanding* there is considerable overlap with the content of *Culture and the Human Terrain*; this is particularly evident in Chapter Three ‘Developing Understanding’. A subsection covers the Human Domain Framework (2010:3-5) of which ‘Culture’ is one of four elements and this is expanded with a more specific section looking at Human Terrain (2010:3-11) and offering a definition of Human Terrain Analysis (2010: 3-11). Human Terrain Analysis is the focus of a substantive annex in *Culture and the Human Terrain* (2013:3B). There are some inconsistencies and differences in terminology, frameworks and models with this and *Culture and the Human Terrain* showing change in the thinking⁴⁶, but the subject matter is broadly the same.

Culture and the Human Terrain only cites *Partnering Indigenous Forces* once, but has content which deals with partnering. Strategic Partners are mentioned in the preface to *Culture and the Human Terrain* (2013:iii) and the risks of misinterpretations with ‘partner nations’ are mentioned in Chapter 1 (2013:1-20). More significantly, three of the case studies demonstrating the utility of cultural advice or advisors are in a partnering context. The naval case study includes joint operations with partners in the Persian Gulf facilitated by an embarked cultural advisor (2013:2-10) and two further case studies describe working with partnered Afghan Security Forces (2013:2-7 and 2-11).

In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* there is considerable influence of *Understanding*. *Understanding* is only cited directly to provide definitions for ‘Individual’ and ‘Collective’ Understanding and the Human Domain (2011:3-15,3-16). However the effect of the doctrine is present in the terminology used. There are repeated assertions of the primary importance of ‘Understanding’ as either essential, critical, required, or key to the processes of partnership and particularly to partnering ‘indigenous’ nations successfully⁴⁷. ‘Understand’ is also included as the first stage in linear processes described in *Partnering Indigenous Forces*. Firstly in formulating a partnership strategy ‘Understand the Environment’ (2011:2-8), and in Figure 2.6 – “Big T/Little t Transitions” where one axis runs

⁴⁶ *Understanding* uses the “Human Domain Framework” to encompass ‘the totality of the human sphere’ and Human Terrain Analysis is seen as a small part of this. Elements such as ‘attitudes and behaviour’ are not expressly referred to as ‘cultural’ here or part of the Human Terrain, where as in *Culture and the Human Terrain* they are seen as both. More detailed tools for Human Terrain Analysis are provided in *Culture and the Human Terrain*. Further, *Culture and the Human Terrain*, offers an explicit revision of the definition of the Human Terrain provided in *Understanding*, which conflates culture and the human terrain as interchangeable.

⁴⁷ in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* 2011 on the following pages 2-4, 2-8, 2-18, 2-19, 3-15, 3-19, 4-4, 4-10

“Understand - Plan - Inform – Influence” (2011: 2-27). In Chapter Three ‘The Military Contribution to Partnering’ the first section is dedicated to ‘Understanding’. The term ‘Understanding’ and its usage is also derived from *Security and Stabilisation* (2009) where ‘Understanding’ is emphasised as part of counterinsurgency and stabilisation operations, and which *Understanding* cites. All three doctrines studied are linked *Security and Stabilisation*.

Partnering Indigenous Forces predates *Culture and the Human Terrain* and so does not cite or directly reference it, but also doesn’t reference its predecessor. It does however include considerable content covering ‘culture’ and the skills and competencies required. It produces its own unreferenced categorisations such as declaring there to be “3 distinct elements” to Cultural awareness: “Awareness, Understanding, and Assimilation”. The approach to culture is piecemeal and unsystematic. It also mentions ‘Human Terrain’ several times (2011:3-4, 3-24, 4A-3) but not in the same systematic way as either *Culture and the Human Terrain* or *Understanding*.

In this section I’ve highlighted the interconnections between the three doctrines analysed. The intertextual references, both explicit and implicit, demonstrate that rather than individual ‘stand-alone’ documents, they are part of an interrelated body of doctrine, and specifically a subset of documents which speak to similar themes related to counterinsurgency or irregular war.

GENDERED CONTEXT ACROSS THE DOCTRINE

The model of gender developed in Chapter 2 and used throughout the thesis is one that rests on the discursive linkages and differentiations that re-enforce a binary and hierarchically organised relationship. Rather than emergent from bodies, it locates gender in the social processes which ascribe meanings with, through and onto bodies. Although various policy changes have meant open service of LGBT personnel is possible and has increased numbers of Black and Minority Ethnic recruits, and to a lesser extent women, the British Armed Forces remains highly gendered. The way in which people are understood as male or female, and are correspondingly situated in the doctrine, reinforces the military as an institution where the workforce is understood as white, male and heterosexual. Rather than overt statements in the three doctrines studied (and indeed the wider doctrine hierarchy including *British Defence Doctrine*) the references to men and women/male and female are more subtle, but present. The table below offers a very basic summary of overt representations of people as men or women in each of the texts.

Table 10: Showing Count of gendered images and terms in the doctrines

	JDN 4/13 Culture and the Human Terrain (2013)	JDN6/11 Partnering Indigenous Forces (2011)	JDP 04 Understanding (2010)
Human Images			
Only or Including people represented as men	3	13	13
Only or Including people represented as women	0	2	0
TOTAL	3	14	21 (8 unclear ⁴⁸)
Pronouns			
She / Her	0	6 (2 non-human)	2 (2 non-human)
He / His / Him	18	101	64
TOTAL	18	107	66
Gendered Terms			
Referring to men ⁴⁹	14	10	6
Of which are military or Servicemen	0	8	5
Referring to women ⁵⁰	20	15	0
Of which are military or Servicewomen	0	4 (3 'Indigenous')	0
TOTAL	34	25	6 ⁵¹

⁴⁸ These eight images were reproductions of paintings, or photos depicting groups of service personnel, where individual characteristics were not very clear. I think they are likely to be understood as men.

⁴⁹ Man, Boy, Lad, Male, Serviceman, and their plurals.

⁵⁰ Woman, Womenfolk, Girl, Female, and their plurals.

⁵¹ N.B The images I've read as representing men or women, based on how I assume they are intended to be understood, they aren't captioned, and I don't know how the people photographed identify themselves.

The table highlights several points. Firstly it is evident that representations of men are more common and masculine pronouns are more frequently used. Notably in *Understanding*, we see a complete absence of women. The document contains no mention of women and no clear images of women, and uses masculine pronouns and referents throughout. In contrast both *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Culture and the Human Terrain* do reference women explicitly. They use male and female pronouns together as ‘his/her’ on occasion to refer to British personnel, but more commonly default to the masculine. *Partnering Indigenous Forces* also uses the convention ‘Servicemen and women’. The inconsistency in use of gender neutral terminology could reflect different times and writing conventions between the doctrines. However defence style guides for writing actively stipulate avoiding gendered language in common with other government writing style guides⁵².

In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Culture and the Human Terrain* we also see that women are referred to directly. These additional mentions of women are marking them as a ‘deviation’ from a masculine norm. In *Culture and the Human Terrain* women are mentioned as a tradable commodity (1-15) or as ‘other parts of the community’ (2-5) and in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* as beneficial to operations in ‘gender-segregated societies’ (3-22), potentially problematic to train (3-23, 3-34) or a divisive conversation topic (4-13, 4-20, 5-9) (discussed in Chapters Five p. 60 and Six p.90). In comparison men are largely unmarked and naturalised, with the term ‘men’ being used to refer to enlisted soldiers, to distinguish them from officers (e.g. In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* 2011: 4-17, 5-3). In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* attitudes towards women are also used to mark a distinction between the UK and the ‘indigenous’ forces or host nation society, returned to below. *Culture and the Human Terrain* is notable for the clear definition of gender as involving both men and women, fluid and constructed, where it is considered as a facet of culture. The other doctrines (and its predecessor) do not engage with gender in this way (see Chapter 5 for discussion).

This section has established the overt references to people understood as men and women, male and female within each of the three doctrines. This shows the similarity across the three doctrines, which contain more images of men, use default masculine pronouns, and when they reference women do so presenting them as deviations from the (masculine) norm. In the analysis in Part II below, the links between the framing of the military as the domain of men, will be explored as part of the discursive construction of masculinity which strengthens and privileges certain forms of military identity. Having established the broader intertextual links and gendered context, the following section in this part will consider a particular set of practices emergent across the doctrine.

⁵² The current ‘house style’ writing guidelines are published as Joint Service Publication (JSP) 101 version 3-1, Defence Writing Guide dated June 2010, and contain a paragraph instructing writers to avoid gender specific terminology. This was also in the previous 2008 version. Similar stipulations are common in government writing guidance eg. Writing for Home Office Science: a guide to house style 2008.

NON-COMBAT PRACTICES

This section draws out some specific similarities in non-combat practices, which are related to the wider military ‘cultural turn’ and population-centred counterinsurgency. These practices vary depending on the specific topic of the doctrine, and have been explored in more detail in the previous three chapters and here particular subset is highlighted. *Culture and the Human Terrain* suggested the necessity of developing empathy, language skills, self-awareness/reflection, historical and political analysis and relationship building. A very similar profile was seen in *Understanding* which as well as advocating ‘cultural skills’ (as those above) also emphasised critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to engage in complex communications processes with multiple actors. In *Partnering Indigenous Forces*, again a similar profile of skills are stressed including ‘cultural skills’ and interpersonal skills, the ability to offer guidance and build trust and relationships. In the following paragraphs the practices are revisited and loosely grouped into three categories: self-awareness, mutual engagement with others and critical analysis.

Self- Awareness

[I]t is also important for a commander to have an understanding of his own culture and an awareness of how it influences his own understanding and decision-making. (*Understanding* 2010: 3-17)

Open-mindedness and a willingness to challenge our own perceptions and ideas is vital in the multinational and inter-agency environments. Patience and listening skills are vital. So is the ability grasp somebody else’s perspective. (*Understanding* 2010:4-3)

It takes a strong person, with a good degree of self-awareness, to operate in this environment. (*Partnering Indigenous Forces* 2011: 4-18)

If we understand our own culture, it will be easier to effectively engage with others, either in peaceful interaction or to gain the advantage in times of conflict. Cultural understanding is crucial in identifying both our vulnerabilities and opportunities, and to dispel any automatic dislike or fear of those from other countries. (*Culture and the Human Terrain* 2013: 1-1)

In each of the three texts self-awareness is stated as important. It is especially prevalent in *Understanding*, where it is stressed as the first of the “6 Principles of Understanding” (2-9, see also Chapter 6:107 for further discussion) and in *Culture and the Human Terrain* where the first chapter begins “Culture is not something that only other people have.”(1-1) and where ‘Self-Awareness’ is one of the three types of cultural training advocated (2011:3-4, see also Chapter for detailed discussion). In both these doctrine self-awareness is seen as central to developing an ability to understand others and contribute to other goals. This forms the basis of engaging others covered next.

Engaging others

We need to develop meaningful 2-way relationships with others who are acting with and alongside us, and we need to interact with those with and amongst whom we are operating (*Understanding* 2010: 1-2)

The mentor has to develop a relationship with the individual, or team, that he is mentoring which must be based on mutual respect and trust. (*Partnering Indigenous Forces* 2011:3-11)

Cultural specialists will often be able to speak the local language and will spend a significant amount of time interfacing with them. This allows them to build relations and develop a greater understanding of the local atmosphere and cultural nuances. (*Culture and the Human Terrain* 2013: 3-9)

Across all three doctrines there is a need to ‘understand’ others, whether adversaries, allies or the ‘Human Terrain’ and build relationships with them. These relationships, as in the first two quotes above, are at times also presented as mutual or reciprocal (although this is not always the case). The development of understanding and relationships is presented as occurring across lines of difference: national, cultural, linguistic, organisational, military-civilian and cross-service. In particular, the ‘Integrated approach’ (formally named comprehensive) stresses the need to work with multiple other government agencies.

For *Culture and the Human Terrain* and *Partnering Indigenous Forces* the understanding of and ability to engage with others is central to their core topic. The focus in both is on stabilisation and counterinsurgency where the ‘others’ are often the ‘indigenous’ forces, or a ‘host nation’. In *Understanding* however, the focus is on command situations and a broader understanding of conflict. The emphasis is on state level relationships and relations within and across the UK Armed Forces, other government departments and security forces. Whilst the focus is different, they all stress the necessity of relationship-building skills. This becomes clear in the short excerpt below, where *Partnering Indigenous Forces* quotes *Understanding* to provide a definition of common understanding, which is presented as desirable for integrating indigenous units into UK command structures:

The aim should be to develop common understanding as defined in JDP 04, Understanding: the ability to comprehend perceptions of groups other than our own and to establish a common baseline for communication, interpretation and action. (*Partnering Indigenous Forces* 2011: 3-15 emphasis in original)

This is a particularly interesting definition, present in both doctrines. It presents an understanding or relationship as emerging initially from an awareness of self and a degree of empathy or understanding of the different perceptions of others. From this, a common ‘baseline’ of shared activities can be established. Each of these stages involves complex interpersonal skills and these are detailed more fully in the preceding three chapters.

Study and Critical analysis

Critical analysis is the intellectual discipline that applies deliberate introspective judgement to interpret, analyse and evaluate a problem and explain the context upon which that judgement is based. However, it is subject to the same biases and perceptions as those inherent in developing understanding and relies on intellectual integrity. (*Understanding* 2010:2-10)

Analysing cultural influences, interrelationships, core beliefs, motives and perceptions is also integral to understanding the operating environment. This is vital to identify cultural sympathies and divisions between an opponent and the population. (*Culture and the Human Terrain* 2013:2-4)

It is essential to gain a deep understanding of the geography, history, culture, ideology and ethnicity of the country if we are to understand if a strategic partnership is plausible and how to develop an effective campaign. (*Partnering Indigenous Forces* 2011:2-8)

The Armed Forces personnel are also repeatedly urged in the doctrine to study ‘deeply’ historical and political factors of conflict, as well as of other cultural and religious traditions. The strongest formulations of this are in *Understanding* which, as we see in the quote above, stresses the development of specifically critical, analytical, even intellectual skills (explored in more depth in Chapter 6). Common across all three doctrine are slightly vaguer suggestions to study and understand historical, political and cultural traits; the presence of ‘criticality’ in this more authoritative *Understanding* perhaps reflects its envisaged audience at higher command levels.

The preceding section has pulled together the three doctrines *Culture and the Human Terrain*, *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding* to explore their intertextual relationships and to highlight a particular set of practices present in all three doctrines. The remainder of the chapter turns to a joint analysis of the doctrines, and the effects of these particular skills - self-awareness, engaging others, and critical analysis on British Armed Forces identity. In the following section the practices described above are analysed in relation to more dominant constructions of British Armed Forces identity exemplified in *British Defence Doctrine*.

NON-COMBAT PRACTICES AND THE WARFIGHTING ETHOS

The initial part of this chapter established interrelationships between the three doctrine and drew out a particular set of skills emergent across the doctrines. This section puts those skills: self-awareness, engaging with others and critical analytical skills, into the context of *British Defence Doctrine*. These skills are newly emphasised in response to recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, where counterinsurgency approach brought these practices into the same sphere as combat or ‘kinetic’ components of the campaigns. Many of the practices in each of the three doctrine can be categorised as non-combat, however here it is argued that the skills laid out in the previous section all go beyond simply non-combative. Rather the forms they take on within the doctrines are more oriented towards peacebuilding and non-violent conflict resolution.

This section looks at the ways in which these practices challenge or disrupt the warfighting ethos articulated in *British Defence Doctrine* and warfighting aspects of counterinsurgency. *British Defence Doctrine* is institutionally privileged and offers a reflection of the most privileged articulations of identity. Here select quotes are used to highlight contrasts with the skills of self-awareness, engagement with others and critical analysis. For the remainder of the chapter, these skills (self-awareness, engaging with others and critical analyses) for the sake of brevity are referred to as *Beyond Combat Practices* or BCPs.

A degree of self-awareness is necessary to evaluate and improve even combat activities. However, the practices recommended in the three doctrines go beyond that. They question cultural and institutional assumptions themselves, rather than simply factors contributing to battlefield performance. The guidance is for individual service personnel, both officers and ranks, to examine their own cultural assumptions, how their behaviour might be perceived differently by others and to become aware of their own biases and preconditions. Yet as we saw in *British Defence Doctrine*:

Moral cohesion depends on cultural solidarity, shared experiences, a common sense of worth, appropriate discipline and an expressed collective identity, which is sustained by shared common values and standards. It embodies genuine and deep comradeship that endures even as the experience of violence and fear of death and injury begin to pervade an individual's conscious and sub-conscious. (*British Defence Doctrine* 2011:4-7)

The 'genuine and deep' comradeship is depicted here as based on commonalities within the group – values, standards and a 'collective identity'. Any level of broad self-awareness and reflection is likely to produce some divisive results, unless carefully and consistently managed. The class, gender, sexuality, ethnic and religious differences present in the British Armed forces are likely to become evident (discussed in Chapter Two see also Basham 2013). My argument is not that social diversity is inherently problematic or precludes a collective identity or common values. Rather that self-reflection, which is more than superficial, will not reveal a single, unified culture or experience suggested as desirable in *British Defence Doctrine*. Rather it would involve facing up to the very different experiences of personnel and particularly that of minority and/or stigmatised groups. The invocation to critical analysis suggests that self-awareness is indeed intended to be more than superficial, at least for some classes of personnel. The practices which advocate engaging others also build from self-awareness to generating relationships that go beyond the 'moral cohesion' of the British Armed Forces. *British Defence Doctrine* emphasises maintaining morale and motivation to fight, which is here presented as supported through 'personal belief':

The will to fight is substantially reinforced and sustained by the personal belief that a nation or community supports a particular conflict and considers that its purpose is legitimate, its conduct ethically sound and military activity properly resourced (*British Defence Doctrine* 2011:4-9)

This belief is likely to be troubled by sustained self-awareness as there are likely to be times, as was seen in the initial invasion of Iraq, that popular support is not an obvious given. Self-awareness is likely to highlight this. Cohesion and collective identity is carefully constructed; the boundaries are often fiercely instilled during initial and ongoing military training (Woodward 2000, Morgan 1994, Hockey 2003). Close affiliation with specific, smaller groupings form part of unit ‘cohesion’ and ‘unity’, both of which are stressed as part of the warfighting ethos in *British Defence Doctrine* (2011:5-10). By necessity this may be undermined (albeit to a varying extent) by seeking out and engaging mutual relationships with others, recognising similarities, developing trust and at its most extreme in the development of forms of empathy. As it was noted in *The Significance of Culture to the Military* (2009:1-7 *withdrawn*) “Dehumanising the enemy can be a useful technique in emboldening the warrior ethos and dealing with the stress of battle”. It takes considerable training to enable military personnel to kill on command and a number of dehumanising and desensitising techniques are used (Bourke 1999: 73-102, Collins 2008:11). Developing ‘empathy’, or even mutual relationships, demands humanisation and sensitisation to others, troubling the boundary lines between self and other. There is considerable discussion around the centrality of unit cohesion to performance, in relation to combat units. This is particularly in relation to the inclusion of women and homosexuals in combat units and their potential ‘disruptiveness’ (see Carreiras 2006: 86-97, and King 2013b for detailed review and discussion). King (2013) argues persuasively that cohesion is created by shared goals, capability and professionalism rather than notions of shared background, camaraderie and group bonding. The point here is not to engage with the substance of those debates, but rather to situate the strong narrative of shared characteristics as bonding produced in and through doctrine, particularly *British Defence Doctrine* and the disruption of this through the practices, particularly self-awareness, highlighted above.

In the postmodern period, more than a residue of the warrior spirit will continue within the officer corps, but we can also expect to see the ascendancy of alternative professional types: the soldier-scholar, including the attainment of advanced civilian degrees; and the soldier-statesman, the officer skilled in handling the media and adept in the intricacies of international diplomacy. This is not to suggest that soldier-scholars were absent in earlier eras, but the relevant empirical question is which kind of officer will most likely be promoted into the military elite. (Moskos 1998:11)

The invocation to deeper study and even critical analysis embodies the ‘soldier-scholar’ ideal which emerged initially along with the idea of the ‘postmodern military’ (Moskos 1998, 2008) and came to prominence with the counterinsurgency turn (Dandeker 2006:415, see Khalili 2010b, and in Chapter 7). The figure of the soldier-scholars is pervasive in the formulations of population centred counterinsurgency and we see figures such as David Petraeus and Lit. Col. Nagl with their ‘advanced civilian degrees’ and promotions embodying the ideal. In *British Defence Doctrine*, one element of the “British Military culture” is the desirability of patriotism as a “collective and individual attachment to the idea of Britishness and the values and way of life that it represents. Owing to history, training and

cultural influences, it also engenders the belief that the British Serviceman or woman is a match for any opponent.” (2011: 5A-3). This seems to suggest an attachment to an ideal of Britain, which relies less on academic rigour but more on a selective engagement with history, re-enforced through training and culture. This is made clearer with one of the quotes used to illustrate the section:

‘Patriotism does not calculate, does not profiteer, does not stop to reason; in an atmosphere of danger the sap begins to stir; it lives; it takes possession of our soul.’ General Sir Ian Hamilton
(British Defence Doctrine 2011:5A-3)

In this quote, calculation and reasoning seem to be presented as the antithesis to responding appropriately in an ‘atmosphere of danger’. Similarly in another quote supporting the attribute of fighting spirit:

‘No method of education, no system of promotion, no amount of common sense ability is of value unless the leader has in him the root of the matter – Fighting Spirit. ’ Field-Marshal Archibald Percival Wavell (British Defence Doctrine 2011:5A-1)

Again, this quote prioritises “Fighting Spirit” over other elements, including education. Although fighting spirit might be the ‘soldier’ element of the ‘soldier-scholar’ the emphasis here is not placed on education. Engagement with deep historical and political scholarship and its application to the military arena is unlikely to support a simple patriotism, at least not if based in ‘intellectual integrity’ as advocated by *Understanding* (2010: 2-10). Combined with self-awareness and engagement with the historical record of the UK in relation to counterinsurgency, this may produce unpredictable results. The British record in counterinsurgency is one which includes considerable brutality and human rights abuses (Newsinger 2002, Dixon 2009).

These skills are undermining to the Warfighting Ethos, through the gendered associations of both warfighting, and the non-combat practices. Gender identity operates symbolically and can be understood in the linkages between certain configurations of masculine or feminine attributes. These are often situated in dualistic, oppositional relationships. Masculinity is in part defined and reinforced through differentiations from others either feminised others constructed as lesser, or deviant, masculinity. There are strong associations between the Armed Forces, warfighting, bodies understood as male and ideals of masculinity. Conversely that which is seen as feminine, often linked to peace and the domestic and civilian. The symbolic understandings of gender are context dependent and nuanced.

In *British Defence Doctrine* we see the linkage of warfighting, dominance, offensive action/activity, technical competence, courage and protection linked together and mutually re-enforced through the tacit understanding of the military as masculine, and warfighting as a pursuit of men. In both *British Defence Doctrine* and the three doctrine studied, we see configurations of masculinity reinforced through the predominance of male pronouns to gender the ‘neutral’ military actor, and images which

link the male body to military roles shown above. Comparatively, where women are noted in the texts, they are marked as a deviation and more commonly seen as civilian. The only image across the doctrine of a uniformed servicewoman is not showing her in a combat role, but sympathetically interacting with a civilian woman, emphasising the gendered division of roles. In *British Defence Doctrine* the two mentions of women outside of the ‘servicemen and women’ formulation, linked women to ‘children’ and labelled them as ‘vulnerable groups’ (BDD: 1-23, 2-12) furthering the gendered norms of protection and feminised vulnerability (see Stiehm 1982).

These connections are reinforced by studies of the British Armed forces which show dominant configurations of a military masculinity which are often associated with physicality, emotional restraint, aggression, etc. (Connell 1995, Woodward 1998, Higate 2003a, Hockey 2003, Duncanson 2009). Conversely the practices and skills seen in the three new doctrines analysed are often those associated with femininity: empathy, social skills, patience, politeness and understanding others. The association of these skills with femininity mark them in stark opposition to the masculine warrior. Rather these practices are more easily understood as civilian. This is actively disruptive to the dominant model of military masculinity we see in the literature and in *British Defence Doctrine*. However the doctrines position them as part of military work and skills.

The practices, then, offer a challenge to certain aspects of identity in British military doctrine – comradeship, cohesion, nationalism, patriotism, combat and masculinity which are woven together in *British Defence Doctrine*. As Lt. Gen John Kiszely, quoted at the start of this chapter, suggests of counterinsurgency the practices depicted here involve “decidedly un-warrior-like qualities”. A paradox of contemporary military counterinsurgency is that prowess in warfighting is positioned as demanding these ‘un-warrior-like’ practices. Practices, which undermine the logics of desensitisation, unquestioning loyalty, and comradeship based on unity. How then are they made sense of? How does the British Armed Forces construct their identity in relation to both warfighting, and peace-building practices simultaneously?

This second part of this chapter turns to the ways in which this paradox is negotiated, and the challenge to warfighting identity is undermined. I argue that the potentially destabilising non-combat, peace building practices are in fact reconciled with narratives which go on to limit the potential for change and to limit what that change might mean. I trace the way the three doctrines draw on other constructions in the *British Defence Doctrine* and through formulations of British dominance and superiority, through the oppositional construction against racialized others and linkages with positive masculine attributes.

8.2 SENSE-MAKING AND RE-STABILISING NORMS

Whilst the previous part of this chapter has argued that the Beyond Combat Practices set up a challenge to the warfighting ethos, posing a level of destabilisation to British Military identity and disrupting the patterns of masculinity which underpin it, this part changes tack. I will make three

arguments, as to how the potential space this disruption opens up for change is limited and constrained by the ways in which the Beyond Combat Practices are framed within the three doctrines. Firstly we see the recoding of the practices as instrumental, through their deployment to achieve influence, and used to further British National Interest. Secondly they are linked not to warfighting, but to professionalism, which offers an alternate arena for hierarchical ordering of masculinity, which reinforces British superiority over an uncivilised other. Finally, British military traditionalism directly and uncritically draws on colonial and imperial experience to guide contemporary operations. This maintains the hierarchical relationship of a superior British Armed Forces and an inferior racialized other. The final section then turns to the way the practices are structured institutionally and draws out an unresolved tension on which their institutional impact rests.

INSTRUMENTALISM

Whilst the Beyond Combat Practices in themselves offer a challenge to the warfighting ethos and destabilise an identity based in combat, this section argues that the impact of this destabilisation is mitigated through the linkage of the BCPs to two narratives which emerge in response to the questions of ‘what we do’. The BCPs are repeatedly linked to achieving influence and the British national interest. Both narratives code BCPs as necessary only to achieve certain ends; ends which strengthen the position of British Armed forces at the expense of others. This section will look at influence first before turning to the British national interest.

In all three of the doctrines the BCP’s (Self Awareness, Engaging Others, and Critical Analysis) are presented as a way to achieve influence - either through strategic befriending, manipulation or outright coercion, as emerged in each of the preceding three chapters. For example *Understanding* argued that “Analysis allows us to construct a more accurate perspective of the human domain [...] This allows us to identify whom we can or cannot influence and how best to apply national power to achieve such influence” (2010: 3-20). This directly ties analysis to achieving Influence. Similarly in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* discussing different forms of national power argues “Whether soft, or hard power, is applied to coerce, deter or defeat a threat, all action is taken to achieve influence to force the other actors to change their path.” (2011: 3-2). The gathering of information and intelligence also recurred in the doctrine, as a utilitarian end for BCPs and often linked into achieving influence (see Chapter 5, p.50, and Chapter 7 p.116)⁵³.

The BCPs are rarely presented as end goals in their own right, but rather are tied to particular instrumental or utilitarian ends. Rather than having intrinsic worth, or simply being a necessary part of being in the services, these practices are seen as being conducive to fulfilling much narrower

⁵³ This is also found in other parts of the doctrine hierarchy for example in the Army Field Manual 1:9 Counterinsurgency where influence is further tied to soldierly work “Soldiers whose business it is to know how to fight have therefore to understand how to achieve influence and use civil instruments of power.” (MoD 2010f: 3-13).

British Armed forces objectives. This instrumentalism and the specific dynamics of achieving Influence as a means to assert authority and gain power, performs a stabilising role recoding the BCPs.

In the context of achieving Influence, in particular engaging others, becomes most commonly coded as functional and unidirectional rather than as an end in their own right and/or consisting of mutual engagement. It asserts a hierarchical relationship between the British Armed Forces and the 'other' who is being understood or engaged with, primarily in order to be 'influenced'. The British Armed Forces are situated in a superior position, as the ones wielding the influence. The possibility of a mutual basis to interactions is correspondingly curtailed. Rather the BCPS are structured as a necessary part of military personnel's ability to control and dominate through influence. This enables a rationale for service personnel both to perform BCP practices but also to maintain the framing of them as performed for necessary operational roles.

The role of British National Interest is prominent in *British Defence Doctrine*, as one of the core elements of identity construction there. It also is very prominent in both *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding*. It isn't present in *Culture and the Human Terrain* which focusses on military expediency and influence, explored above. The theme of national interest fulfils a similar role to 'influence' for both *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding*. It further echoes the tightly defined goals of the *British Defence Doctrine* where the national interest forms a core part of the narrative (see Chapter 4). Rather than being ends in their own right the beyond combat practices are coded as part of a specific agenda. We see the story of national interest most clearly emphasised in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* which also has the strongest articulation of altruistic motivation. As I argued in Chapter Six, the discursive positioning of national interest alongside the altruistic motivations serves to undermine the potentially challenging implications of the British Armed Forces acting for the interests of other peoples and nations whilst simultaneously allows that claim to be made. Moreover, the contradiction between the two narratives is in itself useful: it enables the development narrative to cast the UK as an altruistic, morally superior actor, whilst at the same time legitimating the practices as in British interests. The concerns about 'going native' in *The Significance of Culture to the Military*, and more subtly in *Culture and the Human Terrain* are avoided where affinity with others is permissible and even desirable, when performed for the sake of ones' own nation (see Chapter 5 p.57-58 for discussion).

The Influence and National Interest narratives allow the destabilising elements of the BCPs to be explained. Their non-combat nature and performance is justified as having instrumental ends which support British Armed Forces ability to gain power and superiority in relation to others. This means that even when transgressive, feminised skills are enacted, they can be cast through the prism of national interest or achieving influence. They are therefore pulled back in line with the tightly defined goals of *British Defence Doctrine*. Even when the boundaries between the self and other are being transgressed, it is being done for the sake of defined national interest and is a patriotic frame. The

following section explores the patriotic framing more deeply, looking at the direct referencing of colonial and imperial past, which maintains that hierarchical relationships in the contemporary context.

TRADITION AND IMPERIAL EXPERTISE

From my first interactions in field work and as I immersed myself in doctrine and defence literature, I became aware of what I began calling the ‘Lawrence phenomenon’. Few interactions, or texts about Counterinsurgency and Britain, did not contain a quote or reference to T.E. Lawrence. These were usually taken from the short *Twenty-Seven Articles* (1917) published in the secret intelligence journal ‘The Arab Bulletin’, but sometimes from *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (2008[1926]) his longer work on the ‘Arab revolt’. In each of the three doctrine studied there is a quote from TE Lawrence. Despite, as Gregory puts it, “taking Lawrence as your guide to insurgency in modern Baghdad is like having Mark Twain show you round Las Vegas.” (Gregory 2013: 157). T.E. Lawrence is a figure praised for his expertise in culture and language. The image of the lone figure of Lawrence, living with and leading ‘Arabs’ through his language and cultural skill is a potent one, imbued with the romance of imperial power and masculine adventure in ‘uncivilised’ places (Dawson 1994: part III). An analysis of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* was included in Said’s ground breaking study of western writing on the ‘Orient’, as an example western writing which constructed eastern Others in ways which furthered imperial and colonial projects ([1978]2003:240). The ubiquity of these quotes within the doctrine and in defence circles shows how British military identity draws on imperial history.

The ‘Lawrence Phenomenon’ is part of a central facet in British Armed Forces representation of itself as a ‘traditional’ organisation, with a long history. This is also evident not only in internal representation but also the wider understanding of British military roles in the state and in common historical accounts. The British military, and indeed wider British society, prides itself on historical military ‘success’ as many public displays of pride and commemoration of battles shows (Basham 2013, Foster 1999, Dawson 2004, Morgan 1994). *British Defence Doctrine* reflects this arguing that “The British Way of War derives from a deep-seated martial tradition and a pragmatic fighting culture that stretches back centuries in both historic narrative and public sentiment” (2011: 5-1). *British Defence Doctrine* also expressly notes the influence of colonial and imperial ‘experience’ in this tradition uncritically.

Published doctrine documents are intended to draw from British military tradition, experience and history, and this is cited as one of their sources of authority (Chapter Three). The structure of doctrine (with the exception of *British Defence Doctrine*) usually includes a number of ‘case studies’ and ‘vignettes’ drawn from historical experience (primarily British, but not exclusively). They are also usually illustrated with quotes from past military leaders and theorists, and more recently also include (sometimes archival) images. These leaders and theorists are invariably white men and present a particular narrative of race and gender, reflecting the practice of studying “great white men” as the primary teaching method in staff colleges (Brown & Syme-Taylor 2012:458). These conventions

serve not just to further explain the pragmatic military details, but also present a particular identity for the British Armed Forces, as one established in a long history. This is invariably a history where the British Armed Forces emerge successful, whether directly within the story being told (most commonly) or through productively learning lessons from a past error. Despite the emphasis on self-awareness, particularly in *Culture and the Human Terrain* and *Understanding*, this is a tradition rarely engaged with reflectively or critically, but rather used illustratively.

These conventions are present in the three doctrines studied, although each evoked a different tradition through their chosen quotes, case studies, vignettes and images. It is in *Partnering Indigenous Force* where British colonial history is strongly drawn on (Chapter Five). The wealth of cases used to illustrate the practices of partnering are those where Britain acted as an imperial or colonial power such as Oman, India, Malaysia and Kenya. The doctrine quotes from Rudyard Kipling and T.E. Lawrence (more extensively than *Culture* or *Understanding*), and uses multiple archive images of British colonial and imperial forces. In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* these serve to present the current practise of partnering not as a substantive change, but rather the continuation of previous practice that the UK is able to draw from and in which it has specialist expertise.

In *Understanding*, the framing is less clear. As well as invoking the empire it also draws on an ideal of enlightenment reason, resting on the gendered image of rational man. British colonial practice is still referenced; it quotes TE Lawrence at length (3-16, 17) and uses case studies of British military operations in both Cyprus and Singapore, as imperial interests. However, the cover photo and many of the vignettes, and case studies are drawn from European history – notably Napoléon and Russia, and an operation in WW2 featuring the UK and Germany. *Culture and the Human Terrain* relies less on historical references than the other two and draws its vignettes from recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, having only a single quote from TE Lawrence, heading a chapter. Nonetheless both *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding* draw on a historical narrative of British experience and expertise as a colonial or imperial power which serves to support a narrative of ‘deep seated martial tradition’ specifically linked to these practices. It lends them some of the legitimising authority derived from direct experience (a praised value in the British Armed Force) and the superiority derived from being an imperial power and influential global affairs.

The tradition and experience of colonialism and imperialism invoked in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding* also provides a framing for relationship-building and engaging others. Calling on this historical record invokes a clear hierarchy through which the relationships can be realised and these others understood, studied and engaged. Whilst *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and other doctrine looking at stabilisation repeatedly stress the goal of self-determination, reliance and independence this is undermined by the simultaneous uncritical referencing of a colonial past. Through the invocation of the colonial past to lend lessons to the (imperial) present, the patterns of those relationships are also brought through. Despite the focus in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* on ultimate independence, those mentored and trained by the contemporary forces, are positioned in a

way analogous to those either in former colonial armies or militia raised for imperial ends. British Identity is strengthened through its depiction as advanced, civilised, professional, powerful, competent and masculine in contrast to the 'Indigenous' other: underdeveloped, uncivilised, amateur/mercenary, weak, incompetent and feminized. This supports the narrative of professionalism, British superiority and greatness, but ultimately undermines the possibility for the mutuality in relationship building, genuine empathy, which are at the same time presented as the laudable aim. It is a tension sustained throughout these doctrines.

This section has argued that the emphasis on drawing from previous British experience, in particular that gained from operations in colonial and imperial contexts, situates the BCPs as part of a pattern of relations that reinforces notions of British superiority and the construction of a racialized and inferior other. This pattern of relationships provides a context where expertise in BCPs becomes a way of exerting a power over others and again precludes the building of mutual relationships. The following section shifts direction, rather than looking at how the BCPs are mitigated by other constructions within the text, it looks at the potential of professionalism as an alternative area for making sense of the BCPs as military activities and part of British Armed Forces identity.

PROFESSIONALISM

In *British Defence Doctrine* we see the emphasis on 'warfighting' as the central component of idealised British military identity. This echoes the strong and persistent links between combat and masculine identities, demonstrated in a number of studies and particularly prevalent in military institutions (Hockey 2003: 24, Higate 2003a, Stouffler et al 1949, Barrett 1996). In Part I we saw the way the non-combat practices described in the three doctrines offer a challenge to military logics of warfighting. This section argues that the contradiction between the BCPs and a combat linked construction of identity is negotiated by framing them instead as part of a narrative of professionalism. Rooted in ideas of mastery, expertise, authority and respect, professionalism provides an alternate arena through which a masculine identity can be constructed and the BCPs can be made sense of.

In each of the doctrines there is an attempt to link the BCPs to combat, primarily through emphasising elements of risk and danger. In the analysis of *Culture and the Human Terrain*, cultural expertise was tied to the combative tasks of 'targeting' and 'life and death' situations (see Chapter 4). In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* and *Understanding* whilst combat is not directly referenced, the insecurity and potential for combat is signalled. This in itself serves to evoke an idea of masculine military activity, by linking the beyond combat practices to a situation of risk and danger (See Barrett 1996:134-136 for discussion of masculinity and risk taking). Further, the link to dangerous, insecure contexts, means that non-military tasks become necessary for military personnel to perform, as other such as DFID civil servants or NGO staff are seen as unable or unwilling (for example in *British Defence Doctrine* 2011: 3-3, 3-4). This reinforces the superior positioning of the Armed Forces in relation to these 'less tough' civilian others, again referencing notions of military masculinity associated with strength and risk taking.

Despite the insecure context, the Beyond Combat Practices were not depicting contribution to combat-linked goals but often for mitigating or at least avoiding combat, associated rather with finding 'political' solutions, state-building or strategic decision-making, essentially civilian tasks. In this context it is difficult to situate them as part of a combat-linked masculinity. However in *British Defence Doctrine* alongside the 'warfighting ethos', there is also a strong strand of professionalism. It is through professionalism I argue that the BCPs are made sense of as military activities.

The idea of the 'professionalization' of the military emerged as a concern of military scholars with the western trend to move to volunteer forces in the latter part of the 20th Century. Key texts such as Janowitz (1960) *The Professional Soldier*, and Huntington's (1964) *The Soldier and the State* both bring the professional nature of 'modern' soldiering to the centre of debates on civil-military relations and the changing national and international politics (see Feaver 1996 for discussion). Moskos (1977, 1998) also highlights professionalism as part of a shifts from the military as total institution to an occupation. Rather than professionalism and military organisational structure, the interest here is professionalism as a narrative through which the construction of British military identity emerges.

Defence interest in professionalism coincided with the expansion of the professions outside of the traditional 'Doctors, Lawyers and Clergy' to include a wider range of occupations, including business management. Professional is variously defined in common usage and the social sciences from the broad reference to higher status occupations to resting on specific attributes (Jackson 1970 for overview). Freidson (1983:32) argues the concept of a profession is "an intrinsically ambiguous, multifaceted folk concept, of which no single definition and no attempt at isolating its essence will ever be generally pervasive". The ambiguity enables professionalism to serve as an arena for legitimisation and the accruing of prestige. The traditional association with doctors, lawyers and the clergy, and associated attributes of autonomous expertise and a service ideal, goes hand in hand with esteem, privileges and a special often influential relationship to the state (Wilensky 1964). The aspiration of professionalism, as a mark of military esteem is seen in Huntington:

The modern officer corps is a professional body and the modern military officer is a professional man. [...] Professionalism, however is characteristic of the modern officer in the same sense in which it is characteristic of the physician or lawyer. Professionalism distinguishes the military officer of today from the warriors of previous ages. (Huntington, 1964)

Huntington's assertion of professionalism is repeatedly linked to modernity and positively differentiated from 'warriors of previous ages'. This serves as an example of masculinity serving as a 'cognitive shortcut' which Hutchings (2008a/b) identifies, the masculinity of both the professional officer and traditional warrior establishes both as part of the same phenomenon, and the warrior is used as contrast to the more valued professional officer, of a status with a physicians and lawyers. The

idea of ‘professionalism’ is historically contingent and limited to particular nations (Friedson 1983:20) and Huntington’s use here is rooted in the developments of the US military at the time. However, an ideal of professionalism similar to Huntington’s above, invoking modernity and distinguished practice, is evident in the doctrine studied.

Understanding engages directly with the concept of ‘professionalism’ defining it in the context of British military values as “the desire to achieve operational excellence” (2010: 4-1) or in general “as having impressive competence in a particular activity; an expertise in our field.” (4-1). In *Partnering* one quote argues that “Being a member of a professional, well-respected, ‘famous’ army is what gives you your credibility as a mentor. So you must preserve this status by always conducting yourself as a member of the British army should.” (2011:5-4 quoting Lt. Col. Browne). Similarly in *British Defence Doctrine* the self-esteem of soldiers (seen as key for the moral component or ‘getting people to fight’) is derived from “belonging to a highly professional body of men and women, who collectively reflect the aspirations of society” (2011: 4-8). The British Armed Forces is asserted as professional, as competent, impressive, well respected, and aspirational.

The ideal of professionalism is used to justify or compel particular activities, associated with regulating, or disciplining behaviour where “appeal to professionalism can be seen as one way, among others, to regulate the autonomous conduct of employees through the articulation of competence” (Fournier 1999: 282). This is seen in the doctrine in the appeals for personnel to engage with doctrine: “There is a professional obligation on you to read, to understand, and to be guided by this book” (*Operations* 2010:iii, also the *Army Doctrine Primer* MoD 2011c). It regulates behaviour through the aspiration to professionalism and is part of an identity where “being a professional is not merely about absorbing a body of scientific knowledge but is also about conducting and constituting oneself in an appropriate manner” (Fournier 1999:287). As quoted previously, being a professional in the British Armed Forces means “always conducting yourself as a member of the British army should” (*Partnering* 2011:5-4).

A professional ethos, as opposed to a warfighting one, can be argued as more progressive, replacing now outdated models of masculinity and the ‘band of brothers’ basis of military identity. Anthony King argues while “masculinity was a key motivating factor used to encourage solidarity on the line” [emphasis mine] that today “combat performance – and, specifically, cohesion – relies more on training and professional competence.” (2013a:6, see also King 2013b). As a result, those previously excluded on the grounds of sex, gender, sexuality or race can now be integrated successfully into armed forces if trained and professionally competent. However, professionalism is still gendered. Dent and Whitehead convincingly argue “the label professional never was, and is not now gender-neutral. Like many of the privileged labels and associations that configure organizational life, the notion of the professional suggests an embodied discursive subject which is not woman/female, but is, indeed, man/male/masculine” (Dent and Whitehead 2013:6; see also Kerfoot 1992, Davies 1996,

Connell 1987:181). What a professional, as opposed to warfighting, ethos enables is a different range of practices and attributes to be understood as masculine, and as military.

Earlier in this chapter I traced how the ‘discursive subject’ in the doctrines is constructed as ‘man/male/masculine’, and this mutually reinforces the idea of the war-fighter or the professional. The implications of the gendering of military professionalism goes further than simply what embodied subject is deemed to be a ‘professional’ and their employment opportunities. The construction of the military as a professional and as the military as warfighting, is gendered, raced and classed, and reinforces those hierarchies. This is particularly apparent in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* where professionalism is consistently linked to competence, and situated as the end goal of Security Sector Reform efforts. In the “host nation” the undeveloped security sector must be ‘professionalised’ (e.g. 2011:3-11, 3B-1, 4-5). The narratives of progress and development intertwine with the idea of professionalism, as in the quote from Huntington earlier, is linked to ‘modernity’. The ‘indigenous’ forces are situated as temporally and ethically distant, yet to be ushered into professional modernity. Conversely the British Armed forces already occupy this position – modern, competent and professional. Professionalism becomes another way of asserting a hierarchical relationship and a form of dominance:

The combination of theoretical knowledge with technical expertise is central to a professional’s claim to competence and to a monopoly of practice. This has been constructed historically as a form of masculinity: emotionally flat, centred on a specialized skill, insistent on professional esteem and technically based dominance over other workers. (Connell 1987: 181)

Alternative to warfighting then, professionalism offers a context for framing the BCPs as grounds for a claim to competence and esteem, as technical skill. As Kiszely observes that where the ideal of the warrior is pervasive there is a tendency “to view counter-insurgency as a fringe activity rejecting the notion of expertise in counterinsurgency as a meaningful yardstick of military prowess or professionalism”. However, in the doctrines we see professionalism as a field where non-combat skills are seen as an arena for demonstrating competence.

For example, in *Partnering Indigenous Force* and *Understanding*, we see Understanding framed as competitive where “we will be operating in a single highly competitive (knowledge is power) information and intelligence space” (2011:2-24; also *Understanding* 2010:2-7). Similarly in *Culture and the Human Terrain* there is a focus on success, expertise and ‘competence’ (see Chapter Five). That cultural expertise was valued, as competitive and an arena to gain esteem was also something I experienced in fieldwork: deploying language or cultural knowledge appeared to be a badge of honour. In particular officers would ostentatiously use the common Arab aphorism ‘Insha’Allah’⁵⁴ in

⁵⁴ Which translates literally to God willing, and figuratively to hopefully, it depends, perhaps or maybe.

conversations, and knowledge of Arabic was praised and used, appearing demonstrative rather than as a means of effectively communicating to Arabic speakers about them (occurring even in the absence of native Arabic speakers).

In each of the three doctrines studied we see that learning and assimilating the various practices in them, and the BCPs are part of a project of professionalism, of mastering a necessary skills set. While it is clear that these practices are not easily linked to combat operations or warfighting, they can be, and are, depicted as aspirational through the need for professionalism, for the potential for British excellence. Rather than solely through warfighting then, professionalism and the associated gaining of skills and expertise is an arena through which identity can be constructed. This arena is still gendered. The work that masculinity does here ties together both warfighting and professionalism in the context of the military, as part of a military/masculine realm. So the non-combat practices, which might otherwise be situated as external to the military, part of a feminised civilian realm, are rather constituted as part of the professional, military, masculine continuum.

SPECIALIZATION OR MAINSTREAMING?

This section explores how the BCPs are envisaged in the doctrine in relation to the wider institutional structures of the military. I demonstrate an ongoing tension between advocating for widespread institutional change to accommodate non-combat elements of irregular war, and the containment of non-combat practices to limited roles and contexts. I argue that at present that tension remains unresolved, and this ambiguity and contradiction is useful.

In the analysis of *Understanding* in Chapter Seven I highlighted two ways in which ‘understanding’ and the BCPs were situated as part of the Armed Forces. The first was that of Understanding as an institutional shift to a different mind-set and approach to decision-making relevant across the Armed Forces. The second was that of ‘Understanding’ being identified as a specific skill which could be added into the wider existing skills-set, without disrupting the original paradigm. Throughout the document there is steady tension between suggesting a substantial institutional shift in attitude and thinking, and a shorter term vision where “better understanding” and its requisite skills become simply another new instrument in the tool kit; readily deployable for use in a particular context.

A similar tension can be seen in *Culture and the Human Terrain*. The doctrine suggests a shift to adopt “cultural thinking in all we do” (2013:ii). This is an ambitious and startling goal in its implications, as non-combat practices the BCPs would be integrated throughout the armed forces. Simultaneously the doctrine also sets out a specific role for cultural specialists, as a repository for cultural expertise. These personnel will be selected for their ‘aptitude’, which is suggested to be different to that required for ‘other military roles’ (2013:3-5). This draws a clear distinction between them and the ‘mainstream’ Armed Forces. The institutional increase in ‘cultural thinking’ and the development of the Cultural Specialist Role are not mutually exclusive and the two approaches could suggest a substantive motion towards culturally aware and engaged Armed Forces. However, there is

an alternate reading. The development of the Cultural Specialist role and the idea that this requires a distinct aptitude could also leave 'other military roles' undisrupted by the skills and practices necessitated by cultural understanding. This allows for the calculation of exactly who needs what 'level' of cultural awareness and the potentially disruptive features can be limited from having wider institutional effect. It is unclear what level of 'cultural thinking' will be applied 'in all we do' and whether the measures for integrating 'cultural thinking' will be sufficient to challenge a warfighting ethos.

Partnering Indigenous Forces is more context-driven than *Culture and the Human Terrain* or *Understanding*; focussed on a specific activity rather than a skill applicable in multiple arenas. Similarly to *Culture and the Human Terrain*, *Partnering Indigenous Forces* offers an imagined specialist role for a good mentor (although this does not exist as yet). Further, the practices of training and mentoring have been widespread (and are ongoing) in both Iraq and Afghanistan and partnering is recognised as a task that the UK Armed Forces are likely to continue. The doctrine states there are no specific training courses for trainers and mentors and they are drawn from the forces and specialisms (2011:4-20). The skills described in *Partnering Indigenous Forces* are likely to have an impact across the forces, as a result. In *Partnering Indigenous Forces* an ideal mentor is described with the mnemonic 'Two Faces' of mentoring listing the desired character traits for good mentors and their undesired opposites. Again, similarly to *Culture and the Human Terrain* it is suggested that only certain personnel have the requisite personality traits likely to enable them to mentor.

An imagined Private "Tommy Atkins" is described as the antithesis of what is required for the role. He is contrasted against a reservist, who having worked in a civilian and possibly 'diverse' workplace is more likely to have the desired skills. The role of partnering is presented as a key to interventions requiring a broad sweep of understanding and cultural skills at command level. At the same time, it draws a specialist role for mentors, those having particular character traits, possibly developed in civilian environments. This means it is possible to maintain Pt. Tommy Atkins as highly trained, but with his pornography, fixed ideas, cruelty and emotional distance simultaneously with the empathetic, calm, adaptable, friendly reservist. What matters is managing them, and deploying them appropriately.

In all three doctrines we see different variations on the same theme: calls for widespread institutional change, and calls for a limited specialist personnel or skills. As has been previously argued, these do not have to be mutually exclusive and can be framed as part of the same movement: a broad institutional change and the corresponding development of new, focussed skills. However the two can also be situated against one another. It is not clear that there will be sustained 'cultural thinking in all we do' or an enduring legacy from the 'soldier-scholars' as we have seen in the previous sections. This would require substantial shifts away from hegemonic models of masculinity which value combat-oriented attributes and practices. Whilst alternative constructions such as shift to 'professionalism' may emerge, these are uncertain and emergent. Contained specialisms offer a

chance for the UK Armed Forces to have it both ways. The necessary skills can be located within particular roles and people which constrain and limit their overall reach. Differentiated from ‘other military roles’ they do not pose significant impact on the wider institutional norms, other than a need to consult and employ specialists as needed.

However, a change in ‘thinking’ and the adoption of BCPs may be necessary across the institution if the likelihood is that at any ranks or specialism maybe called upon to perform partnering activities and to draw on cultural thinking and understanding, and if a failure to do this may undermine the potential success of either partnering operations, stabilisation operations or interventions. The tension between these two modes is present in the doctrine and unresolved and such ambiguity may be useful leaving space for future development in relation to defence trends.

CONCLUSION

Population-centred counterinsurgency, and the ‘cultural turn’ in response to deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan, required the military to adapt and respond to the new environments drawing on historical experience, theory and the ongoing lessons learnt in the contemporary operating environment. In terms of doctrine, the conflicts occurred at a time of increasing production of doctrine and the formal codification of practice. I’ve demonstrated throughout this thesis that studying doctrine gives an insight into the institutional responses to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. We see what practices are formally recognised and codified as necessary to the effort, and desirable to promulgate, but crucially I have shown that we can trace how practice is made sense of and framed, giving insight into the ways in which British military Identity is constructed.

In this chapter I have brought together the insights from the analysis of *Culture and the Human Terrain*, *Partnering Indigenous Forces and Understanding*, and *British Defence Doctrine* in Part II. I have shown the ways in which they are interconnected as part of the web of doctrine documents. I’ve highlighted the tensions between *British Defence Doctrine* which articulates a dominant narrative of British identity, and the other three doctrines which describe non-combat practices, implicated in counterinsurgency campaigns. I’ve argued that the non-combat practices are ‘un-warrior-like’ depicting feminised and civilian practices. Further self-awareness, critical analysis and engaging others offer a challenge to certain aspects of British military identity – comradeship, cohesion, nationalism, patriotism and combat which are woven together with masculinity in *British Defence Doctrine*.

In the second part of the chapter I’ve looked at the ways in which that challenge is mitigated by how the practices are framed within the text. These have been made visible through applying a gendered lens to identity construction and through the framework of three questions which brings ‘what we do’ and ‘how we do it’ and ‘who we are’ into view. I’ve shown that there were three clear ways in which the potential for substantial institutional impact was mitigated. Firstly through the framing of the BCPs as instrumental, to facilitate the gaining of power, or ‘influence’ over others, and through their

use for the British national interest which precludes the possibility of egalitarian or mutual relationships to be built. Secondly, the traditionalism celebrated in the British military directly imports colonial and imperial understandings of racialized others, which again limits the possibility of mutual relations. Finally, whilst the nature of the BCPs makes it hard to code them as part of a warfighting ethos they were instead linked to a professional ethos. The narrative of professionalism, whilst loosening the combat-based identity and opening up space for different forms of military, is still gendered. It is rooted in notions of masculine superiority and situated against an ‘unprofessional’ other. It constructs British Armed Forces identity in a hierarchical context of competition and dominance.

The practices highlighted in this chapter have the potential for considerable institutional impact in the armed forces. Yet they are presented in the doctrine as necessary for contemporary military practice in complex operational environments, particularly counterinsurgency and stabilisation operations. However to fully engage these practices would imply serious shifts in aspects of the institution and in the multiple ways military personnel understand themselves and their work. The final section of the chapter addressed how the non-combat practices are situated institutionally, highlighting an unresolved tension within the documents which simultaneously advocate the BCPs general applicability and stipulates their restriction to specific personnel.

The doctrines exhibit ambiguity, contradictions and tensions. The patterns and models of identity they present are different; emerging in conjunction with the practices they capture and aim to shape and in the wider narratives of the military institution. They depict practices which are non-combat and some which go beyond that and are understood in ways which undermine the logics of the warfighting ethos – cohesion, unity and patriotic nationalism, underpinned by combat-masculinity. In this sense the British military identity has to negotiate and reconcile two idealised figures of the counterinsurgent – the warrior and the state-builder, which emerged from population-centred counterinsurgency. These have to be negotiated in such a way that non-combat, “un-warrior-like” and formerly civilian practices can be understood as part of a military framework. This thesis has shown the ways in which this is possible – instrumentalism, traditionalism, professionalism, and institutional ambiguity. These processes can be further established as military through recourse to masculinity, constructed in and through imperial relationships of race. This is, as I will fully outline in the concluding chapter, enabled by the relationship between masculinity and war as empty signifiers, but mutually definitive (Hutchings 2008a).

In the concluding chapter I will relate these findings to the wider narratives of counterinsurgency. The period of enthusiastic support for population centred counterinsurgency has waned, as Iraq and Afghanistan are not the stable, democratic states imagined. The wars have been declared over but remain a daily reality for Afghans and Iraqis. The British Armed Forces are facing substantial cuts, whilst assimilating the ‘lessons learned’ in Iraq and more recently in Afghanistan. Counterinsurgency raised the questions of what the armed forces is for and what the armed forces can do, and that is also

a question of who they are. The blurred lines between war and peace, military and civilian are central to that question. The following chapter concludes with the contribution that this research makes.

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION

This is a much more complex form of warfare and the training we are carrying out is tailored to that. We are absolutely trying out things here which have not been tried out before. We believe that this will apply not only to Afghanistan but other such conflicts in the future. (Kiszely 2006:10)

INTRODUCTION

This thesis began with a quote from an infantry officer who having served three tours in Afghanistan reflected that “this ‘war’ is really not what war is typically understood to be” (Simpson 2012:2). His book, blending field experience with theory in the tradition of a ‘soldier scholar’, is an endeavour to sort out what kind of war Afghanistan was. It grapples with the definitions of war, the distinction between types of violence, between the military and the civilian, the political and the pragmatic. Simpson (2012:9) points to the “blurred conceptual boundaries between war and peace” and argues that war is an interpretive framework, a way to make sense of political violence. He argues that war should be limited to refer to only certain contexts to avoid “a severe erosion of the interpretive difference between military and political activity; war and peace” (Simpson 2012:231). This is precisely what makes counterinsurgency such a challenge for military institutions. It so obviously transgresses the boundary lines of the military and civilian, of war and peace, and the related lines of peacekeeping and warfighting, inter-state and intra-state, between criminal violence and political violence, enemies and allies, the ‘good guys’ and the ‘bad guys’. Writing of Iraq in 2004, late defence historian Richard Holmes describes the conflict as

neither a conventional battle between two symmetrical adversaries nor a peace-keeping operation, for the very phrase implies there is a peace to be kept. It was instead a postmodern conflict comprising extreme violence and near-normality, formally structured military operations and sheer terrorism, diplomatic negotiations and Mafia-style power-brokering, all intertwined like the skeins of a rope (Holmes 2006: 135).

It is not simply that this makes for a complex operating environment for the Armed Forces, although that is certainly the case. Rather, it is through the definition of these lines that the identity of Armed Forces is articulated. The legitimacy of the violence which they are licenced to inflict, and the ideals for which personnel risk their lives rest on a morality embedded in the boundary lines of war and peace, of ‘us’ and the ‘enemy’. The extent to which the military is a special institution of the state, and military personnel are a venerated class rests on a distinction between military protectors and civilian vulnerability. My research questions emerged from and in relation to, a curiosity about these blurred lines and what happens when the simple story of military identity is disrupted by the practices on the ground. How does the British military, which prides itself on its warfighting ethos, make sense of the “un-warrior-like” non-combat practices of counterinsurgency?

This question is one which requires a feminist approach to fully understand. The blurry boundaries of counterinsurgency are gendered, rooted in notions of the masculine warrior and a feminized peace and the complex interplay of hierarchical masculinity and femininity. The masculine warrior is constructed against a pacific feminine. The binary between the military and the civilian is one made sense of through gender. Not only is a gendered approach necessary to a full understanding of these dynamics within counterinsurgency, a feminist methodology offers particular insight, with feminist approaches already sceptical of the divisions in ‘conventional’ war and alert to the relations of power that structure them. The issues raised by the blurred boundaries in counterinsurgency, and the questions raised for military identity and military practice, are likely to be an issue for many years to come. They are characteristic not only of counterinsurgency but also in ideas of ‘hybrid’ and ‘asymmetric’ threats and tactics which currently characterise projections of future warfare (MoD 2010br).

This conclusion is structured into two parts. The first part reviews the thesis, revisiting the central argument, demonstrating the work that gender does in making sense of the contradictions before highlighting the key arguments and contributions, the interplay between gendered identity and counterinsurgency warfare. In the second part of the chapter – and concluding part of the thesis – I return to the feminist debates raised in Chapter Two, considering what this thesis on counterinsurgency contributes to the question of whether the military can be an actor for peace, and under what circumstances.

9.1 MASCULINITY, DOCTRINE, AND BRITISH MILITARY IDENTITY

This part of the chapter revisits the central argument of the thesis, before turning to the methodological contributions and the specific findings of the research. The first section outlines the methodological contributions, reiterating the importance of a feminist approach, which has been demonstrated as a productive means of analysing military identity throughout the thesis. I then look at the focus on doctrine, as a site of military institutional identity construction. Finally, I evaluate the three questions framework – as an analytic strategy to understand identity construction and the representation of practice. The second section turns to the empirical concerns of the project. I revisit chapters 4-7 and the findings of the analysis of the body of doctrine, both as individual documents and collectively. I conclude by summarising the overall argument of the thesis.

CENTRAL ARGUMENT: THE WORK THAT GENDER DOES

This thesis mapped what happens when the simple story of military identity is disrupted by the practices on the ground. It shows how the warfighting ethos is contradicted by the “un-warrior-like” practices of counterinsurgency and how this is made sense of. The central argument is that the relationship between gender and war, or more specifically between masculinity and warfighting or combat, provides a conceptual resource for making sense of the military, when the definition of war itself is questioned. Gender, the binary between masculinity and femininity, also makes sense of the borderlines between war and peace, and the military and the civil. By constructing these practices as

part of a masculine identity, they are more easily situated as part of military work, despite their non-combative nature. The civilian “un-warrior-like” and formally feminised practices are actively normalised and embraced as part of military practice, and paradoxically as part of war. This argument reaches beyond the context of counterinsurgency, but has relevance to broader shifting of military roles in relation to peacekeeping operations, and to ideas of hybrid war and cyber warfare where the paradigm of conflict shifts and militaries must adapt.

A gender lens is able to capture and interrogate these processes. As Hutchings (2008b) has shown, war and masculinity are empty signifiers, in which the formal relationship between them serves to define their shifting substantive content. When counterinsurgency warfare demands non-combat, civilian practices such as political reconstruction, state-building and community outreach are performed by military actors; this is made sense of through the relationship of war and masculinity. By establishing these practices as masculine, they can be understood as part of a military phenomenon and military practice which includes combat. In the relationships between the practices, and in relation to combat, they can be distinguished against one another as good or bad instances of masculine/military activity (Hutchings 2008a). They are not understood as feminine or peaceful which would situate them outside the military, and situate counterinsurgency as not-war and thereby as aberrations of military activity. In this way the relationship between masculinity and the military makes sense of the complex ‘postmodern’ confusion of counterinsurgency warfare which troubles the neat boundary lines of war and peace, military and civilian, technical and political aspects.

This is, however, a process – a sense-making and human process – which is impartial, incomplete and contested. Even as the boundary lines are negotiated and made sense of through recourse to hierarchies of masculinity and imperial logics, they remain troubled. They are destabilised by the inconsistencies between the non-combat and combat practices which are brought together in counterinsurgency history. They are disrupted by the gaps between humanitarian rhetoric and imperial realities at the heart of counterinsurgency campaigns, both past and present. In this disruption there is the potential for reform and change, and the potential of this for a feminist politics of peace is returned to in the second part of this chapter.

The rest of this part turns to the main methodological contributions of the thesis, first demonstrating why a feminist approach is central to understanding counterinsurgency, secondly, considering doctrine as a site of identity construction, and finally evaluating the development of the three questions framework to explore the representation of practice in identity. This part concludes by reviewing the core findings of the empirical research.

DEMONSTRATING THE NECESSITY OF A FEMINIST GENDER APPROACH

I’ve demonstrated in this thesis that a feminist approach to counterinsurgency is productive, a necessary approach to the study of counterinsurgency warfare. The blurry and contested ground of counterinsurgency troubles the lines on which military identity is constructed; that is, the gendered

binaries of war and peace, military and civilian. Defining counterinsurgency requires delineating between the sub-state political violence of terrorism or assassination and the state sanctioned political violence of war; between the private violence of crime, and the public violence of national or international politics. How and where the lines are drawn is part of what counts as war and what is 'other than war'. What is understood as war by the actors involved, impacts on the kinds of violence used, and against whom. The contribution of a feminist approach to counterinsurgency rests on several interconnected lines.

Firstly, as I explored in Chapter Two of the thesis drawing on feminist work, the military and combat are rooted in dichotomous understandings of the masculine and feminine. This is a symbolic process, but also reinforced and reinforcing the delineation of men's and women's roles in war. It can be observed, for example, in the systematic exclusion of women from the military or combat roles and the association of women with the civilian in need of masculine protection. The boundaries troubled by counterinsurgency are gendered in western thought. A feminist approach, as I have adopted, through making gender visible shows the complex relationship of military identity and war in the changing and complex operational environment. This leads to a further contribution of a feminist approach.

Feminist approaches to theorising war tend to be multidimensional, integrating understandings of gender operating symbolically, institutionally and as a facet of individual identity (see Hooper 2001, Peterson 2008, Cohn 2013). As we see in counterinsurgency, the boundaries are troubled along these lines, where actors, institutions and the symbolism of war are all simultaneously brought into question. In analysing the doctrine I have focused on the institutional identity of the armed forces, through recourse to gendered symbolism, showing the interaction between the two. Whilst it was beyond the scope to study the role of individual identity construction, the impact of institutional identity on the role of individuals in constructions of the warfighting personnel as warriors and/or state builders is central to the analysis. The role of individuals in interpreting, embodying or resisting this in their own identity construction has been a fruitful area of study (Duncanson 2013).

Crucial to understanding counterinsurgency and the relationship of the military to non-combat practices is the ways in which the construction of identity through gender is one that invokes a structural power relation. Understanding the gendered associations of war and peace as masculine and feminine sheds light on the reluctance of Armed Forces to engage in non-combat activities. Feminist approaches are united by a close attention to and theorisation of relations of power (Cohn 2013:4). We see gendered distributions of power privilege the masculine (and that associated with the masculine) over the feminine (and that associated with the feminine). I've shown the complex patterns of identity construction which circumvent the associations of non-combat practices with the feminine and the civilian, in order not just to make sense of them in a military context but also make them palatable to a military audience.

The sophisticated understanding developed in feminist work on the interrelationships of power embedded in and constructed through ideologies of gender, race, class and ability enables the tracing of these multiple systems through the doctrine (McClintock 1995, Agathangelou & Ling 2004). By taking an intersectional feminist approach to doctrine, I've highlighted the role of imperial history in the doctrine, and the relationship to masculinity. I've shown that making sense of counterinsurgency for the British Armed Forces is a process embedded in complex relationships of gender, race and class which emerge through the veneration of an imperial history.

A feminist approach to counterinsurgency enabled me to demonstrate the boundaries as *already* blurred. Paying attention to women's lives, feminists have argued that the lines between conflict and peace are not the same for all actors in a conflict (Cohn 2013; Enloe 1983, 2007, Diwan 2007). Whilst the counterinsurgency literature is concerned with the definitions of war and the role of the military, feminist work has been considering these lines as already unstable and questionable. Rather than trying to re-establish or define where the new lines are, taking a feminist approach has allowed me to interrogate the processes at work that are engaged in producing the categorisations and counterinsurgency practices as war, as well as in the construction of military identity. As I have argued throughout this thesis, feminist work on gender and war is ideally suited for analysing the processes of sense-making which are engaged in counterinsurgency and is more broadly applicable to trends in future, irregular war.

DOCTRINE AS A SITE OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

In Chapter Three I traced the evolving path of my research, which moved from original study based on documents through planned ethnographic work in Iraq, before returning to documents once again. Negotiating the planned fieldwork was demanding and ultimately unsuccessful in terms of getting to Iraq, but it was nonetheless an integral part of the research process and led to the development of the focus on doctrine. Through interacting with various military actors I developed a sense for the central role doctrine plays.

Doctrine is under-researched and has mostly been subject to discussion from practitioner-theorist perspectives (with the notable exceptions of Hoiback 2013 and Daddow 2002, 2003). Where doctrine has been studied, it has been for insight on the traction of particular military approach to tactical or operational decision-making or theory, rather than its institutional or organisational role. The potential of doctrine as a source of data to analyse the military as an institution has been neglected. What I have demonstrated in this thesis is the value of doctrine as a rich source of data for understanding military identity construction and for mapping institutional processes and change. Doctrine can be productively understood as a site of identity construction where on-the-ground practice is negotiated, reinterpreted and prescribed in relation to understandings and projections of who the military is and what it does.

It could be argued that military doctrine has some similarities with other forms of institutional documents common to complex bureaucratic workplaces such as common operating procedures, staff handbooks, and policy documents. However, the range of roles it fulfils, how it is authored and disseminated and how it sits within the military as an institution makes it unique. It is hard to define as it fulfills multiple roles simultaneously - it is at once 'the soul of warfare' (Corbett 1914:24), 'what is taught' (MoD 1997), 'the way things are done' (Storr 2007:189) and that which provides 'the common outlook and uniform basis of action' (Holmes in Hoiback 2013:9). Whilst historically there has been reluctance in the British Armed Forces to produce formal written doctrine, this is no longer the case. British military thinking and practice is now interpreted and negotiated in a vast web of interconnected documents. To such an extent that this is a phenomenon described by Sheffield (2010) in the case of the Army, as a reinvention to become a 'doctrinally-based organisation'.

The move to become a 'doctrinally- based organisation' is aided by changes in technical capacity - the ability to produce doctrine in digital forms means it is now a practical possibility for a full library of doctrine to accompany military personnel into the field. Indeed, the full range of doctrine was issued to personnel deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan on a set of CD-ROMs called the 'Battlebox' and is available to personnel via secure servers. Although the extent to which it is actually engaged with, and how, is a question that demands closer scrutiny than the limited study to date (Harvey & Wilkinson 2009).

The digital production of doctrine also enables unrestricted documents to be made publically available on-line. Indeed some documents are prepared with a wider readership in mind from other government departments, allies and NGO staff and to the (global) press and general public. Identity is constructed within some doctrine not only for internal consumption then but also with an eye for public relations. Doctrine not only reflects how the military wants to see itself, but also how it wants to be seen. We see in contemporary doctrine an increasing attention to the 'production values'; the organisation and presentation of the texts with more photographs, illustrations and elaborate diagrams.

As you will have seen throughout this thesis doctrine is not simply guidelines to practice, technocratic instructions or statements of purpose, although it is these too. It is embedded with stories, vignettes and case studies, analogies and references to history and contemporary examples of practice. This mix of content, and the interweaving purposes, multiple audiences and the interconnection between the texts sets doctrine apart from other institutional documents.

One element which makes doctrine such a productive field of study for those interested in the military as an institution is the relationship of doctrine to practice. Doctrine has a dual role in articulating identity and practice simultaneously, and in conversation with each other. What is done, how it is done, and a narrative of who the British Armed Forces are is brought together in the documents which aim to both reflect and shape the institution. I have tried to show in this thesis that the relationship is simple or direct. Doctrine both reflects practice on the ground and shapes it in a complex reciprocal.

Doctrine is not an 'accurate' record of practice on the ground, any more than what is written in doctrine is what is carried out by personnel. Rather, it is an interpretation of current practice on the ground, through an institutional process which seeks to influence not only practice on the ground, but how practice is understood both within the military and to external actors. It is these relations to practice that make doctrine a site through which sense-making can be fruitfully examined, as I have demonstrated in my analysis.

Crucially, doctrine sits at the crux of an ongoing tension within the military between tradition and conservatism on one hand, and the pressure to innovate and adapt to the contemporary and future operational context on the other. This ongoing iterative relationship with practice and identity in doctrine makes visible this tension and can give insight into the active and ongoing processes of institutional adaption and resistance to change. Doctrine draws authority and legitimacy from referencing previous works, tradition and practice whilst also responding to the contemporary operating environment and a modern authorship. Whilst this is particularly pertinent to counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare where adaptation and change are understood as central to asymmetric advantage it is a continual challenge for the military as a large institution which must adapt to rapidly changing global political environment and technological change.

Doctrines are not fixed or static documents and offer an insight into these processes of change, which are reflected in the constantly evolving body of work. There is a structured and organised process of review and revision in their creation and dissemination. I have argued that they are 'living' documents, situated in an ongoing process of review and refinement rather than static texts. The result being a dynamic and vast collection of documents which inter-relate across a range of time-periods. It is possible to trace the evolution of terms and language, and ideas, across the body of documents as they are reviewed and revised to reflect current thinking.

Throughout this thesis I have focused on doctrine as finished documents, and the narratives of identity, practice and purpose that were constructed in and through them. I set beyond the scope of my research the exploration of the authorship and the process of creating doctrine, in order to approach the documents without the additional influence of knowing the authors and editors and their own intentions. However, through the process of reading of the texts and within the context of a broader reading across a range of Allied, single service and joint doctrine the differences in tone and style are evident, at times clearly marking distinct authorial voices. The multiple sites for doctrine review and authorship, and the increasing standardisation and professionalization of doctrine production and writing, through the Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) undoubtedly impact the texts and how they are perceived. Consequently, how doctrines are authored, reviewed and revised and by who offers a potentially valuable and productive approach to the study of military institutional change.

In this thesis I also focussed narrowly on Joint Doctrine documents, intended for use across the services, and which are UK specific. However close cooperation within NATO, and the trend towards military operations to be conducted in coalition means that Allied doctrine has increased salience. The way in which identity is constructed within and across Allied Doctrine would offer an interesting insight into a military identity existent beyond the nation state, and would make a fascinating comparison with the heavily nationalist British doctrine. Outside of formal shared NATO doctrine, there are particularly close military ties between the English speaking military forces – of the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. These relationships are reflected in lower level and more technical doctrine and procedures, however increasing coalition operations places an incentive on using similar concepts, language and practice. Again the ease and availability of sharing and study doctrine documents may facilitate this exchange. Comparisons of doctrine could offers an interesting arena in which to trace these relationships, change and resistances.

In summary, one of the key contributions of this thesis is to demonstrate the potential of military doctrine as a rich source of data through which to explore military identity, institutional change and continuity. Doctrine, understudied and still evolving as a written phenomenon in the UK is a site through which practice and identity are articulated, interpreted, revised and disseminated throughout the Armed Forces. As such it overs a snapshot of military thinking, tensions, and relationships which can further understanding of the institutions of warfare.

THE THREE QUESTIONS FRAMEWORK: CAPTURING PRACTICE

In Chapter Three, the feminist theoretical approach developed in Chapter 2 was drawn together with Duncanson's (2009, 2013) of Hansen's (2006) poststructuralist discourse analysis as a methodology for the study of military masculinity. I traced how the research developed from early fieldwork into a focus on the relationship of practice and institutional identity. This in turn led to two key aspects of the thesis: the focus on doctrine (above) and the development of the 'three questions' framework. This framework was developed to structure the analysis of the doctrine in a way which foregrounds practice. This I argued could be seen through the interplay of a) narrative understandings of 'what we do', b) depictions of practice, ie. 'how we do it' and c) overt statements of identity, i.e. 'who we are'.

The three questions framework captured the interplay of representations of practice and identity. In particular this allowed me to trace how non-combat practices were understood and made sense of as part of British military identity. The seemingly straight-forward questions "What do we do? How do we do it? Who are we?" enabled the identification of a sense-making process within doctrine, where the stated identity, practices and functions are reconciled with each other. In Chapter 4 this revealed the simple formulation of warfighting and defence of the national interest both shaped and supported by ideas of the British Armed Forces as a cohesive and unified institution in *British Defence Doctrine*. In the three doctrine depicting non-combat practices this relationship was destabilised, as warfighting was displaced by non-combat practices. The cyclical formulation of "We are the armed forces, because we fight wars, through the deployment of force, because we are the armed forces" was called

into question. Using this framework enabled a systematic approach to all documents and provided an analytical focus, interrogating the relationship of military practice to identity.

CORE FINDINGS

The second part of the thesis constituted the empirical analysis of the doctrine. Four doctrines were analysed in turn, tracing the construction of identity in relation to practice. In Chapter Four, I analysed the document *British Defence Doctrine* to trace a dominant and overarching configuration of institutional identity through a mutually reinforcing configuration of the warfighting ethos and national interest. Professionalism and humanitarian concern were peripheral and constructed in such a way to support the centrality of British national superiority and the primacy of coercive force. This provided the necessary context for the analysis of three doctrines which dealt with areas of practice emerging from population-centred counterinsurgency – culture capacities, partnering ‘indigenous’ forces and improved understanding.

In *Culture and the Human Terrain* I traced the construction of identity which coded the non-combat, civilian practices as instrumental, and embedded in rationality, objectivity and technocratic mastery. This identity, although not invoking the relationship of combat and masculinity, was nonetheless embedded in gendered dynamics and framed the practices as part of a masculine identity. In the analysis of *Partnering Indigenous Forces* I showed how identity was constructed primarily through a paternal, imperial framing. Partnering indigenous forces in counterinsurgency was part of shouldering the ‘white man’s burden’. In the analysis of *Understanding* I traced the construction of identity that represented sophisticated intellectual skill, open-mindedness and creativity as part of an Enlightenment tradition of thought, and ideas of reason and rationality. These ideas are embedded in a gendered dichotomy between reason and emotion, and within the text reason and rationality are constructed as masculine. In sum, each of these chapters illustrated how, when it wasn’t possible to link the practices being described directly to combat or the use of force as part of the warfighting ethos, they were nonetheless constructed as forms of masculine identity – technical, rational, paternal, and imperial. The argument is not that any of these aspects are inherently ‘masculine’ or ‘male’, emerging from an essentialised body. Following Hutching (2008a, 2008b) masculinity is understood within this thesis to be an empty signifier, with shifting content. Rather we see the construction of masculinity within the texts through the relationships. Wider discourses of masculinity are invoked and re-enforced, through both recalling the masculine body in images and gendered language, and through the relationship of masculinity and the military embedded in the British Armed Forces as an institution.

Chapter Eight considered the doctrine in concert, looking at the connections within and between the documents and highlighting the tensions between *British Defence Doctrine* and the three subordinate doctrines. By focusing in on the description of the nature of the practices, I argued that some aspects were not just non-combat, but are practices which actively undermined the warfighting ethos. Practices of self-awareness, empathy, engaging others, critical analysis, traditionally implicated in

peacebuilding logics which cannot be fully rationalised into a framework of coercive force. However, I argued that this challenge to the warfighting ethos is mitigated by the ways in which they were constructed. Firstly, this is seen through the instrumentalisation of the practices. They are shown to be deployed to fill narrow ends of coercion through achieving ‘Influence’ or supporting Intelligence or “Information” needs, and in the service of the British national interest. This undermines the disruption, providing a rationale for (feminized) non-combat skills which codes them as indirectly supportive of the (masculine) warfighting ethos, and in the service of a gendered nationalism. Secondly, we see the practices made sense of through the structures of traditionalism, which recall the imperial dynamics supporting notions of British superiority. The doctrines draw authority from the prior deployment of these skills as part of building and enforcing empire, a role which firmly established the dominance of the British nation in and through their Armed forces. A dynamic embedded in the raced and gendered tropes of empire. Finally, I argue that an idea of professionalism has the potential to offer a space in which alternative constructions to the warfighting ethos are possible, but that the idea of the defence professional is constructed through gendered logics and hierarchy.

Chapter eight culminates in the argument that there is a tension regarding the reach of non-combat practices of counterinsurgency. On the one hand there is an expansive vision of institutional change which would make the practices described more central to all military work. On the other hand the practices could be contained within specialist roles or particular functions. This could be formally, as with the new Cultural specialism, or less formally through the selection of particular personnel such as more ‘civilian’ reservists for mentoring duties, leaving regular ‘Tommy Atkins’ unreformed. Rather than a vision of ‘cultural thinking in all we do’ or improved understanding across the whole institution, the restriction of change to only some personnel could lessen the impact of such reforms across the institution. Core ranks and specialisms could remain unaffected by an operational need or desire for cultural awareness, which would instead fall to a specialist. This tension is unresolved, leaving the possible future directions for the Armed Forces open.

In the final section of this thesis I consider what my study of counterinsurgency and the military use of non-combat activities to wage war can contribute to debates about military reform. I return to the feminist debates outlined in Chapter Two, which question the extent to which the military can adapt to non-combat activities and can contribute to peacebuilding as well as warfighting.

9.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR HARM-REDUCTION AND PEACE?

Combat is ultimately what armies are for. The primary purpose of an effective army should be the application of force or the threat of force, potentially through combat. (*Operations* 2010e:8-2)

There has been some limited feminist support for the wars on Iraq (e.g. Elshtain 2008) and more widely on Afghanistan, from activists and feminist NGOs such as the Feminist Majority in the US

(see Hirschkind & Mahmood 2002). However primarily there has been a feminist scepticism about both wars, manifesting in both academic critique (e.g. Abu-Lughod, 2002; Al-Ali & Pratt 2008, 2009; Cloud, 2004; Stabile & Kumar, 2005; Hunt & Rygiel 2006, Shepherd, 2006) and in a resurgence of (transnational) feminist peace activism (see Cockburn 2007:48-58). This has been in part a reaction to the particular perception of illegitimacy of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and claims that they will bring liberation and improved global security in particular. However it also builds on a longer tradition of feminist scepticism about the military, and the use of military forces as a means to achieve peace. The perception that future war is likely to be characterised by hybridity, and asymmetry makes these debates imperative – we need to understand the capacities of military for non-combat missions.

In this chapter I return to the feminist debates detailed in Chapter Two. Whilst some anti-militarist feminists expressed scepticism at the possibility of Armed Forces to ever act as agents for peace, other feminists support the notion that reformed military forces may be a necessity to protect threatened civilians (Duncanson 2013:2-4). I argue that my thesis contributes to this debate focusing on whether armed forces can change; both demonstrating the possibility for some reform and the limits to it.

In focussing on the military performance of non-combat activities in this thesis the intent is not to make an argument that the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have in any way contributed to peace. The overwhelming evidence of death tolls, casualty figures, internally displaced people and refugees makes this clear (Hicks et al 2009; IBC 2015; Amnesty Int. 2015). However, in focussing on how militaries make sense of the practices of non-combat aspects of the campaigns can shed light on the interplay between the uses of different types of force, and the arguments for and against them. Through exposing the way these arguments are caught up in the identity of Armed Forces, and are made sense of through masculinity, offers new sites for contesting and resisting the logics of violence. I position counterinsurgency here as a military *practice*, one that expressly combines combat ‘kinetic’ activity and non-combat practice as part of a state-building, as we have seen practiced on a large scale in Afghanistan and Iraq. I situate this practice as part of a spectrum of military activity, where the boundaries between peacekeeping, stabilisation and counterinsurgency *practice* are indistinct. The doctrine studied in this thesis are applicable to any of these scenarios for military deployment.

MILITARY ABUSE OF POWER AND IMPERIALISM

In Chapter Two of this thesis I considered the feminist debates around military peacekeeping or peace enforcement mission in the post-Cold War era. At this time UN peacekeeping missions seemed to offer a new direction for military forces. However the practice of peacekeepers on such missions came under scrutiny. There were growing concerns about military involvement in sexual exploitation and abuse around military bases, expansion of prostitution, rising HIV infections and a wilful ignorance or even complicity in people trafficking (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002:63; Whitworth 2004:13, Allred 2006; Mendelson 2005). Feminists highlighted how the response mostly pointed to a prevailing culture of ‘boys will be boys’, rather than exhibiting a willingness to investigate the extent of abuse and harm, and strategies for its amelioration (Whitworth 2004; Martin 2005:4; Mackay,

2001). This raised serious questions about whether soldiers, trained in deeply gendered military institutions, could act as agents for peace and if so, what conditions could prevent abuses of power.

Some feminist critiques of peacebuilding missions in the 1990's connected these abuses by peacekeeping forces on the ground to the wider framing of the interventions. They argued that the peacekeeping missions were grounded in imperial narratives, situating the (white) Western nations as intervening to instil order and bring civilisation to places and people conversely understood as uncivilised, underdeveloped, even barbaric (Razack 2004, Whitworth 2004, Orford 1999). These 'civilising' narratives were embedded in relations and are established through a nexus of gender and racism. Here, the military forces were the agents taking on Kipling's (1899) 'white man's burden', a story of coming to manhood through the civilising 'savage wars of peace' for the sake of ungrateful natives. It is argued that these wider narratives impact on military behaviour on the ground, fuelling racist and gendered abuses of power and dehumanising attitudes towards locals (Razack 2004, Miller and Moskos 1995). Thus, abusive behaviour cannot be understood in isolation but must be situated in the context of the broader framing of the Western interventionist agenda.

Indeed, the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq have been justified by similar logics. They were framed as wars of liberation for the people of the countries, particularly emphasising the emancipation of women. In the case of Afghanistan the war was further justified by public commitment to women's rights. It framed US and coalition forces as 'white men, saving brown women, from brown men' (paraphrased from Spivak [1988] 2005:68). A rhetoric which rather than improving conditions for women, situates women's bodies as a contested cultural ground with often devastating effects; physical control over women became a symbol of resistance to western domination (Kandiyoti 2007; Al-Ali & Pratt 2008, 2009).

STRATEGIES FOR REFORM, AND THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF IT?

There is little controversy within feminist work on the problematic relationships between masculinity and the military, and the structures of race and class which co-constitute it. Where approaches vary is with the necessity of Armed Forces and the possibility for reformed militaries to act for peace. Feminist strategies for peace either advocate reform of militaries on one hand, or are sceptical of the possibility of reform, pursuing anti-militarist or pacifist stance. In this section I offer a brief review, first of the reform position and then its critique.

In a very different context from Iraq and Afghanistan, feminists working with women on the ground in conflict zones noted both calls for changes in the behaviour of peacekeepers and the ways in which they decreased their security – but also valued their presence, to an extent. There is also evidence that peacekeeping missions have also seen improved security and reduced deaths (Bellamy, Williams & Griffin 2010:1-2). In this context, it is argued, there is a need for a reformed military to provide security. Cockburn & Hubic (2004) articulate this as a potential 'degendered' military. The strategies for achieving such a military are varied. This includes the increasing participation of women in

Armed Forces. Either resting on the idea of an essentialised or socialised characteristics of women as more ‘peaceful’ (De Groot 2001) or more radically as a means to disrupt the relationship of masculinity and the military. As Duncanson argues “female bodies need to be involved in ‘masculine’ activities in order to begin the process of destabilizing their definition as masculine” (Duncanson 2013:153). Beyond increasing the numbers of women there are arguments to decouple military action from national interest which is embedded in ideas of the ‘masculine citizen-soldier’ defending a feminized civilian homeland. Alternatively, pushing for an alternative ‘post-national’ military (Kronsell 2012) and a universal cosmopolitanism (Kaldor 2007b; Elliott & Cheeseman, 2004). Finally, military cultural change through improved training and education and to increase the valuing of peacebuilding work and understand gendered security dilemmas. Indeed, existing reforms seek to ‘mainstream’ gendered approaches into military and the security sector. For example, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 necessitates women being included in post-conflict reconstruction. The new language documented in this thesis suggests such strategies do have an impact on military institutions. We can observe such attempts to understand and integrate concepts of human security and gender awareness in the doctrine with increasing sophistication.

On the other hand, anti-militarist feminists argue that these reforms do not sufficiently address the global inequalities which perpetuate the conflicts, and hold those whose interests are served by many forms of military activity to account (from interventions to defence partnerships and defence industry links). The addition of women into the Armed Forces does not sufficiently disrupt the relations of power embedded in military structures and combative women can serve as ‘sexual decoys’ masking the imperial and patriarchal logics of military violence (Eisenstein 2006; also Enloe 2007b: 74). Further, the translation of feminist ideas of conflict resolution and peacebuilding into the existing constructs robs them of radicalism, and serves to give imperialism and gendered hierarchy a new face which leaves the relationships of oppression unchecked (Eisenstein 2006, Pratt 2013). Military reform will not sufficiently disrupt and dismantle the patterns of violence.

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

In this thesis I situate myself between these two positions. I argue that reform is possible and is observably occurring in the British Armed Forces. I’ve demonstrated non-combat ideas, associated with lessening violent coercion, and with more equitable relations are being assimilated into the British military institutional structures. We see concrete measures to develop ‘cultural capacity’, improve language capacities and ability to work in multicultural environments, and include impacts on populations as part of military best practice. Whilst it is a stretch to argue that the military could act for peace based on such reforms, they represent a potential for harm-reduction. During pre-deployment training I attended during fieldwork an NCO walked us through a mock checkpoint and the procedure. He explained the hand gestures and instructions that would be rehearsed at a checkpoint as a situation escalated to the point of opening fire, and when pushed by another attendee, the two options for kill shots. A document which became public following wiki-leaks whistle-

blowing revealed the numbers of civilians killed at checkpoints in Iraq (Harrison, 2010). The factors in the deaths are unclear, but fewer civilians might be killed at checkpoints if soldiers are both required to and can communicate them within their own language (the NCO described commands being given in a language other than English as optional) and an understanding that hand gestures and body language are not universal. There is an unpleasant paradox: valuing civilian lives as part of a war effort may reduce the numbers of people harmed, even when as rhetoric it perpetuates the myth of a 'kinder, gentler' war.

However, I also demonstrate in this thesis the limits to such reforms and the institutional ambivalence to the performance of non-combat linked activities. These activities destabilise the core tenets of British military identity – the nationalism and a warfighting ethos which is a source of pride. Non-combat practices are reconciled into the military by recourse to instrumentalism which leaves these relationships intact, and valorises combat masculinity. The British expertise in irregular warfare is based on a colonial history of subjugation and the superficial engagement with such a history leaves lessons which are half-learnt. All wars are bloody and destructive; involving civilian death, injury and displacement, material damage and loss of infrastructure which further damages the social relationships from which meaningful peace can be built. The applicability of lessons from empire which fill the pages of doctrine and the libraries of military institutions, and bolster the pride of uniformed personnel, come with a set of relations it is not easy to escape. They were campaigns built on the racial and moral superiority of the British people and their right to rule, a logic made sense of through gendered ideas and imagery; without recognising this, it is a legacy which is antithetical to peace.

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